

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2008
Best Western Kelly Inn, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Area 5 Co-Director Ian Cunningham, Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney. Also in attendance: BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke, BWSR Assistant Director Steve Woods, BWSR Assistant Director Julie Klocker, BWSR Board Chair Randy Kramer, BWSR Board Member and Carver SWCD Supervisor Bob Burandt, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Ann English, Carlton SWCD Supervisor Larry Sampson, Carlton SWCD Manager Brad Matlack, Wilkin SWCD Manager Don Bajumpaa, Chisago SWCD Supervisor Roland Cleveland.

Absent: Area 1 Director Russ Severson, Secretary Treasurer Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek.

1. President Pederson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Spitzer, to approve today's agenda with additions. Motion carried. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Schulz, to approve the January 10 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson
 - a. Statute allows for the Association to provide input to the Governor on the appointment of SWCD representatives to the BWSR Board. The actual language of the statute is:
“... In making the appointments, the governor may consider persons recommended by the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts. The list submitted by an association must contain at least three nominees for each position to be filled.”
Minnesota Statutes § 103B.101, subdivision 2(c)
Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Loy, to submit the three names of Louise Smallidge, Mary Wetter and Paul Krabbenhoft, as recommendations to the Governor. Motion carried. Louise Smallidge, Washington CD Supervisor, currently sits on the BWSR Board and is interested in continuing to serve. Mary Wetter, Wright SWCD Supervisor, has indicated that she is submitting an application and requests the Association's support. Paul Krabbenhoft has expressed interest in serving again – he has served on the BWSR Board in the past. Because of the current vacancies, it's likely the appointed SWCD representative will be from the 7-county metro area or Area 2.
 - b. Pederson reported on the convention of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) held in Reno, Nevada in early February. Items of business at the convention included a transition of leadership with elections, the Capitol Court Campaign to raise funds for maintenance and improvements of the Washington D.C. office, dues and resolutions. Eight resolutions were submitted from Minnesota to the national convention for action. Sunderland reported on the results of action taken on those resolutions:
MN resolution No. 34 (FSA Aerial Photography). This resolution was amended to read in the last paragraph to: “NACD will work to (strike acquire) encourage adequate funding”. The reason for the change is that NACD does not acquire funds. The resolution failed 1-10 in committee. The reasons given were that current NACD policy already recognizes the importance of the aerial photos but adequate funding is hard to define in these times of funding shortages.

MN resolution No. 38 (National Public Service Messages). This resolution failed 2-5 in committee. NACD policy already supports all media coverage. While Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are not specifically mentioned, it is part of the process. The MN delegates brought in Randy Koenen, the President of the National Farm Broadcasters Association and a MN native, to explain how PSAs worked, were made, and the cost. Randy did an excellent job of explaining how radio selects PSAs whether they come from the AD Council or individual organizations. It was discussed that this resolution was a good reminder to the new communications committee.

MN resolution No. 32 (Hay as Base Acres). Resolution failed for “no motion” to bring it forward for a vote. There was strong opposition from all states, except Midwest states, on commodity crops. There was very strong opposition from California’s representative, who stated that they are the number 1 agriculture state in the country, have very little commodity crops grown there and have no desire to see any added. Most stated that this is a commodity issue and not a conservation issue.

MN resolution No. 28 (CRP eligibility). Failed 1-8 in committee. This is current NACD policy that supports the eligibility of hay and pasture for CRP cropping history. It was said that this may be written into the House version of the Farm Bill that is being debated right now.

MN resolution No. 25 (Cellulosic Ethanol Production utilizing CRP Native Prairie Grasses). Failed in committee 3-6. Currently some harvest is allowed with a CRP payment reduction. NACD policy is if Congress creates an energy crop production program, NACD will support a stand alone energy program with conservation compliance and technical assistance.

MN resolution No. 26. (Construction of Conservation Practices on Land Enrolled in General CRP). Passed in committee 10-0. It is now NACD policy! It was stated that this practice is already allowed in some states on a limited basis.

MN resolution No. 27 (CRP Rental Rates). Passed committee 9-1 and passed the full board meeting! This now joins NACD policy that already fully supported this concept but had other formulas and soil loss rates.

MN resolution No. 33 (HEL Soil Loss Compliance). Failed in committee for lack of “a motion” to bring forward for a vote. This is already NACD policy 8.J.7 and 8.C.1. The committee and NACD fully support this policy. During the discussion it was stated that this issue is in the House version of the Farm Bill at this time. There is a stipulation that reads “based on the severity of violation.” This matches our resolution’s version.

Buck noted that there was a feeling of frustration among convention participants due to the Farm Bill not yet being passed through Congress. Dana York with NRCS reported that NRCS currently has 12,000 employees nationwide, 6,000 of which are eligible to retire in the next 10 years, raising questions about replacement of those retirees and training needed for new staff, as well as whether retirees might want to work part-time for SWCDs. Buck also noted that Congress may be considering lowering the national CRP acreage cap to free up funds for other programs.

- c. Pederson referenced copies provided to board members on *The Farmer* magazine’s coverage of MASWCD’s Outstanding Conservationists and noted the coverage was excellent.

4. Finance Report – Ken Pederson

- a. Pederson presented the monthly financial report on behalf of MASWCD Secretary Treasurer Clark Lingbeek. Pederson then accepted subject to annual review.
- b. Pederson led the board in a review of 2008 membership dues received to date.

5. Policy/Resolution Committee – Steve Sunderland, Chair
 - a. Sunderland provided an overview of the Watershed Basin Management District Proposal authored by Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead). Rep. Lanning attended the February 8th meeting of MASWCD’s Policy Committee to discuss the bill, HF2536. Motion by Loy, seconded by Cunningham, to accept the committee’s recommendation regarding the bill: that additional time is needed to review the implications of the bill and the impacts to SWCD funding and governance related issues; MASWCD encourages additional discussion with all the local government units impacted by the legislation. Motion carried.
 - b. Sunderland reviewed the process the Policy Committee undertook to prioritize resolutions that were approved by the membership at MASWCD’s annual convention in December. Motion by Zabel, seconded by Loy to include all existing resolutions in future prioritization exercises. Motion carried with dissenting votes from Schulz and Spitzer.
 - c. Sunderland provided an update on activities of the Conservation Technical Assistance Committee, which is working on governance and funding issues related to the Non-point Engineering Assistance program.
6. MASWCD Executive Director’s Report – LeAnn Buck
 - a. Buck reviewed the results of the MASWCD Board Retreat held January 9-10, including an overview of the two-days and an outline of the priority issues tentatively identified by the Board. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Aigner, to adopt the priority issues. Motion carried.
 - b. Buck noted that BWSR is leading an effort on rule revisions to the Wetland Conservation Act. Vanney is representing the Association on the WCA Permanent Rule Advisory Committee.
 - c. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Zabel to approve future board meeting dates as recommended by Buck. Motion carried.
 - d. The Washington D.C. Civic Leadership Session of the MASWCD Leadership Institute will be taking place March 1-5. Vanney has been coordinating and will be attending with the group.
 - e. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Loy, to submit a formal request to NRCS State Conservationist Bill Hunt for an economic impact analysis of federal conservation programs on local economies. Motion carried.
7. Minnesota Forestry Association of SWCDs – Brad Matlack
Matlack provided background and current information on the group. He thanked the MASWCD board for its commitment to help with funding in the past and for support of the upcoming conference being held March 26-27 at Breezy Point. The group has offered a scholarship to the MASWCD board to attend the conference. Pederson will appoint a board representative to attend the conference.
8. NRCS Report – Ann English, NRCS
English reported on the NRCS budget, computers, and the current U.S. House and Senate proposals for dealing with WRP land valuations in the Farm Bill.
9. BWSR Report – Randy Kramer, John Jaschke, and Julie Klocker, BWSR
BWSR representatives reported on SWCD demographics, BWSR staff contact information, SWCD guidebook, RIM Clean Energy, Vegetative Buffer Cost-Share, Cooperative Weed Management, Watonwan SWCD board appointments, SWCD Web Sites, the Performance Review and Assistance Program, and a report on feedlot financial needs.
10. Legislative Update – Judy Erickson, MASWCD Legislative Affairs
Erickson updated the board on activities at the legislature, including the bonding bill. She noted that the February revenue forecast for the state is expected to be released soon. There may be supplemental budget bills to deal with cuts if the forecast is much worse than it was in November.

11. The next board meeting will be held March 25th at the MASWCD office in St. Paul.
Other future meeting dates include:

April	no meeting
May	May 20 th at MASWCD office
June	late June, in conjunction w/MACDE meeting, Breezy Point
July	no meeting; NACD Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. is July 18-23
August	August 26 th at MASWCD office
September	September 23 rd at MASWCD office
October	no meeting
November	to be determined; usually earlier in month
December	December 7 th in conjunction with MASWCD annual meeting at Crowne Plaza St. Paul Hotel Riverfront
December	December 9 th at conclusion of MASWCD annual meeting at Crowne Plaza St. Paul Hotel Riverfront

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.