

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2008
MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 1 Director Russ Severson, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary/Treasurer and Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD Executive Director LeAnn Buck, Assistant Director Sheila Vanney. Also in attendance: MASWCD Legislative Affairs Specialist Judy Erickson, NRCS State Conservationist Bill Hunt, U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar's staff Dave Frederickson, MACDE President Rick Reimer, BWSR staff Dave Weirens, Wayne Zellmer and Al Kean. Absent: Area 2 Director Ross Aigner.

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 Kelly, to approve today's agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Severson, to approve the March 25 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson, MASWCD President
 - a. Pederson recently participated in a leadership conference entitled "Making Communities Work: Leadership across Public, Private, Nonprofit and Geographic Boundaries." Kelly and Buck were also invited to participate in the conference, which was presented by the Extension Center for Community Vitality and the Center for Integrative Leadership of the University of Minnesota. Pederson also reported that he will be meeting with non-member Morrison SWCD on Thursday.
 - b. Pederson, Sunderland and Buck will be attending the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD's) Legislative Conference in July. The event will be in Washington D.C. MASWCD will be scheduling meetings with members of Minnesota's Congressional delegation to discuss federal conservation issues of interest to SWCDs.
 - c. Pederson updated the board on NACD funding issues, including an update on quota payments and an update on the Capitol Court Campaign that is raising funds for maintenance to NACD's office building in Washington D.C.
 - d. The MASWCD board of directors will hold an abbreviated meeting at Breezy Point, from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, June 24. This is in conjunction with the summer conference of the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (MACDE) being held June 22-25. Pederson noted that he would like to express to the SWCD employees that the MASWCD board supports their work.
4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek, MASWCD Secretary/Treasurer
 - a. Lingbeek presented the monthly financial report. Pederson accepted subject to annual review.
 - b. Lingbeek updated the board on dues payments.
5. 2010 Convention Site & Host Area Selection – Sheila Vanney
Vanney presented a summary of proposals received from facilities interested in hosting MASWCD's December, 2010 annual convention. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Loy, to select the Crowne Plaza St. Paul Hotel Riverfront as the site for the 2010 convention. Motion carried. Schulz asked to allow Area 8 to host the event. Board members supported Area 8 serving as host.

6. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck
Buck reported on the board priority issue regarding SWCD Election Awareness and the publication MASWCD put together entitled, "An SWCD's Guide to the 2008 Elections Process." This information has been forwarded to the membership. She also presented an update to the MASWCD 2008 Work Plan, discussed her participation in the Public Issues & Leadership Development Conference in Washington DC and the Extension leadership conferences, "Making Communities Work: Leadership across Public, Private, Nonprofit and Geographic Boundaries." Buck also reported on the next MASWCD Leadership Program and BWSR responses to local district resolutions.
7. NRCS Update on Conservation Programs – Bill Hunt, NRCS State Conservationist
Hunt presented an overview of the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill from the perspective of the President's Administration. Easement payments for the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) will be calculated by taking the lesser of the market survey approach, the geographic cap, or the offer by landowner. The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is now the Conservation Stewardship Program and will no longer be administered on a watershed approach. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has been extended to include forest management and energy conservation, with the overall payment limit of \$300,000 per person (down from \$450,000) over the life of the Farm Bill.
8. Congressional Overview of Conservation Title of the Farm Bill – Dave Fredrickson, Outreach Director for Senator Amy Klobuchar.
Frederickson discussed the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill from Sen. Klobuchar's perspective. The Senator is very pleased with the bipartisan effort that went into this Farm Bill.
9. Overview of State Cost Share Program – Dave Weirens, Wayne Zellmer, BWSR
Weirens made some opening comments regarding the state cost-share program and its recent changes. Zellmer went through a slide-show presentation covering the history of the cost-share programs, how it has evolved and where it is today, including information on the base allocations, native buffer cost-share, cost-share for weed cooperatives, and cost-share through the Clean Water Legacy Act. Zellmer also addressed changes that have been made to cost-share practice eligibility criteria that were in response to MASWCD resolutions.
10. Feedlot Cost Share Needs Assessment Report – Al Kean, BWSR
Kean presenting information on the feedlot cost-share needs assessment report. Information was recently presented to the state legislature, with some concern surrounding the 2010 date and how the state should move forward with bringing feedlots into compliance with state and federal requirements. The board discussed the funding options for feedlot improvements.
11. Legislative Update – Judy Erickson, Legislative Affairs
Erickson summarized for the board the activities of the past legislative session and how SWCD initiatives fared. A memo version of the information has been e-mailed to SWCDs.
12. U of M Extension Integrated Leadership Conference – Kathryn Kelly
Kelly discussed her participation in the leadership conference, "Making Communities Work: Leadership across Public, Private, Nonprofit and Geographic Boundaries."
13. Board members had an informal discussion on the topic of changing the MASWCD governance structure/Area boundaries to match the boundaries of the Technical Service Areas (TSAs) should the TSA boundaries change.
14. The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m. The next board meeting will be held June 24 at Breezy Point.