

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2010

Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) conference room, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Steve Sunderland, Vice President & South Central Area 6 Director Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Northwest Area 1 Director Ross Aigner, West Central Area 2 Director Ralph Peterson, Northeast Area 3 Director Kurt Beckstrom, Metropolitan Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Southwest Area 5 Director Ian Cunningham, Southeast Area 7 Director Bob Borchert, Secretary/Treasurer and North Central Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney; MASWCD Legislative Affairs Specialist Judy Erickson; BWSR Assistant Director Steve Woods; NRCS Acting State Conservationist Jennifer Heglund; MCIT staff Dana Hedberg.

1. President Sunderland called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Cunningham, to approve today's meeting agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Cunningham, seconded by Borchert, to approve the January 13 meeting minutes with changes. Motion carried. Motion by Borchert, seconded by Beckstrom, to approve the February 17 meeting minutes with changes. Motion carried.

2. President's Report

- a. Sunderland reported that the Association is moving forward with fund development strategies. He, Kelly, Schulz and staff met earlier this morning with Matt Musel from the University of Minnesota regarding a fund development partnership. More information will be available at the May board meeting.
- b. Sunderland and Kelly reported on the Local Government Stakeholder Meeting with MASWCD, Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) and Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). He noted that the group is looking at areas of common interest among the associations and their members related to conservation delivery. The group will continue to meet in the coming months.

3. Finance Report

- a. Schulz presented the monthly financial report and Sunderland accepted subject to review.
- b. Schulz reported on the March 10 Finance Committee meeting and presented recommendations from the Committee related to requests for dues hardship designations. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Kelly, to approve 2009-2010 payment plans for Aitkin, Dodge, Mille Lacs and Steele SWCDs. Dues must be paid in full by October 31 in order to have voting benefits for the pre-convention resolution process and voting at the state convention. Motion carried. Beckstrom abstained from the vote. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Borchert, to approve 2009-2010 hardship designations and adjusted dues payment amounts for Beltrami (\$920), Crow Wing (\$1375), Kanabec (\$500) and Mahnomon (\$0) SWCDs. Motion carried. Motion by Zabel, seconded by Aigner, to approve a 2009-2010 hardship designation for Isanti SWCD with an adjusted dues payment amount of \$1375. Motion carried. During the Committee meeting, members also discussed Area budgets and internal audits of those budgets, as well as possibly changing the membership of the Finance Committee to be Area Treasurers. The Committee will continue addressing these issues in the future. Schulz expressed frustration with the two districts which refuse to pay dues toward the association, and board members discussed the issue further.

4. 2010 Resolution Number 1 Statewide Dialogue on SWCD Structure

Buck presented a draft resolution for the board's consideration on how to move forward with this resolution. Motion by Borchert, seconded by Kelly, to adopt the resolution titled, "MASWCD forum for

SWCD critical thinking and leadership," with the added statement that the outcome of the forum and next steps identified at the forum will be reported at the annual convention. Motion carried.

5. Executive Director's Report

- a. 2010 MASWCD Work Plan. Buck reviewed with the board progress made on the work plan.
- b. 2009 Res. 16 & 17 Forestry Easements & Forestry Economic /Environmental Study. Buck reported on a meeting she coordinated with Schulz, Aitkin SWCD Manager Steve Hughes, BWSR staff Dan Steward, and Calder Hibbard with the Minnesota Forest Resources Council. The group discussed the issues presented in two resolutions that were approved by the membership in December that relate to forestry issues – easements on forest land, and studying the economic and environmental effects of forest fragmentation.
- c. NACD & Itasca SWCD Host Resource Conservation Act Focus Group. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is working with the Itasca SWCD to hold a focus group with local forest managers and landowners. The effort is being undertaken to assist USDA in preparing reports and documents called for in the Resources Conservation Act, which was renewed in the 2008 Farm Bill.
- d. NACD Update on USDA's information technology systems. Buck worked with NACD to have Jim Krosch, Stevens SWCD Supervisor, testify before the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry in Washington DC. The NACD is working to urge Congress to continue to invest and improve technology and software to help landowners plan and implement conservation practices.
- e. Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Advisory Committee. Buck reported MASWCD was asked to have representation on a committee as the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council works on a 25 year framework. Darren Newville from East Otter Tail SWCD will serve on this committee representing SWCDs.
- f. Election Information & Update on Filing Period. Vanney reported that the elections filing period will be May 18 – June 1, 2010. This is the timeframe when interested individuals can file with their county auditor to be on the ballot for SWCD Supervisor. She will be putting together an elections guide for SWCDs and posting it to the web site and sharing the information with our members.
- g. Minimum Impact Design Standards. Zabel noted that he is serving on a workgroup that is providing advice to MPCA related to Minimum Impact Design Standards (MIDS). Jay Riggs from Washington CD is also on the workgroup. Buck noted that she will be putting an article on MIDS in the next issue of Bits of Tidbits.

6. MASWCD Legislative Update – MASWCD Legislative Affairs Specialist, Judy Erickson, reported to the board on recent activity at the legislature and the Association's Legislative Platform.

7. BWSR Report – BWSR Assistant Director, Steve Woods, reported to the board on Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations from the Clean Water Fund and next steps. He also provided information on SWCD budgets, and the Marshall-Beltrami SWCD transition.

8. NRCS Report – NRCS Acting State Conservationist, Jennifer Heglund, reported to the board on the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, and other NRCS activities and programs.

9. MCIT Report – MCIT staff, Dana Hedberg, provided an overview of MCIT services to SWCDs, and discussed Area Meeting training opportunities. Area Directors continue to utilize various MCIT speakers to address training items for our members.

10. The next board of directors meeting will be held May 25 in St. Paul, with exact location and start time to be determined. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.