

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING
Friday, January 24, 2025
Morrison County Government Center, Commissioners Board Room
8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Brutscher, Hubner Faber, Saeher and Scholl. Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein, Knopik and McDonald; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; Landowner: Duane Kroll

2025 RE-ORGANIZATION – APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (Items 2-10) – Saeher/Faber to approve items 2-

10. Vote by role call. All unanimous.

1. Swearing in of New Board Members – Dave Hubner, Thomas Brutscher and William Faber.
2. Official Date, Time, Location: Fourth Friday of Each Month, 8:00 a.m. at USDA County Office or Morrison County Government Center in special circumstances
3. Official Per Diem and Mileage:
 - Per Diem - Full Board Meetings, Day Meetings, Committee Meetings, and/or Payroll Signature - \$125
 - Mileage – Increase from \$.67 at IRS Established Rate to \$.70 as of 1/1/2025
4. Official Publication: Morrison County Record
5. Official Posting Location: Morrison SWCD Website and USDA Service Center Building
6. Official Bank of Deposit: Pine Country Bank Checking and Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund (4M Fund)
7. Resolution adopting the Morrison County Local Water Management Plan and adopting it as the District's Annual Plan.
8. Grant Agreements / Contracts Signature Approval: Morrison SWCD's District Manager, Shannon Wettstein, in the absence of SWCD Board Members, may sign grant agreements and/or contracts.
9. Minimum Fund Balance Approval: The minimum Fund Balance will be **3 months** of Operating Expenditures.
(ie: PL Operating Exp. + Personnel for FY, divided by 12 x 3 months = MFB)
10. Capital Assets Policy of Threshold Approval: Capital Assets Policy Report, **\$5,000** and above will remain the level of threshold documented, for depreciation, for all purchases by Morrison SWCD.
11. Officers for 2025 – Wettstein asked for nominations three times. Faber made the nomination for Saeher to serve as Chair. Second by Brutscher. No additional nominations were received. The vote was unanimous by the board for Saeher to serve as Chair of the board in 2025.

Saeher called for nominations for Vice Chair three times. One nomination was received by Hubner for Brutscher to serve. Second by Faber. Motion passed unanimously for Brutscher to serve as chair.

MSC Faber/Hubner for the rest of the roles of the board to rotate one up so that Faber will serve as Secretary, Hubner as Treasurer and Scholl to serve as Public Relations. Motion passed unanimously.

MSC Faber/Brutscher for the committee assignments to stay the same with the addition of Saeher serving on the One Watershed One Plan along with Scholl, Faber and Brutscher. Motion passed unanimously.

The following is the new roles and responsibilities of the board members for 2025.

Roles	2024	2025
Chairman	Dale Scholl	Scott Saeher
Vice Chairman	Scott Saeher	Tom Brutscher
Secretary	Tom Brutscher	Bill Faber
Treasurer	Bill Faber	Dave Hubner
Public Relations	Dave Hubner	Dale Scholl
Committee Assignments	2024	2025
Finance Committee	Brutscher / Saeher	Brutscher / Saeher
Personnel Committee	Hubner / Faber	Hubner / Faber
Water Plan Representative	Brutscher	Brutscher
WCTSA	Faber / Hubner	Faber / Hubner
One Watershed One Plan	Scholl / Faber / Brutscher	Scholl / Faber / Brutscher / Saeher

The reorganization meeting ended and Saeher took control of the meeting as chair.

SECRETARY's MINUTES – Scholl/Brutscher to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

TREASURER's REPORT– Wettstein shared the administrator of our 4M accounts is available to speak to the board in March. This will be timely as our certificates of deposits are set to expire at that time so meeting with him will be a chance to ask questions. There was discussion by the board about looking forward to his presenting. The two main questions they would like the 4M Administrator to answer is what they cannot do with the districts money when it comes to investments and if they could provide additional detail on the investment accounts. Hubner/Faber to accept the treasures report. Motion passes unanimously.

COMMISSIONER's REPORT – Winscher shared that Land Services is working on the ordinance section pertaining to renewable energy as the county ordinance is lacking especially when it comes to battery storage and anerobic digesters. This spurred a discussion on ACUB easements and when renewable energy is allowed. McDonald was there to answer questions on the differences in programs with federally funded easements allowing solar and state funded easements not allowing solar. She also explained that applicants would need all the permit requirements met from local, state or federal offices.

STAFF REPORT – Zapzalka shared 36 of 83 EQIP applications are pre-approved. Of those 14 are cropland, one pit closure, one rotational grazing, four Certified Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP), four high tunnels, 12 forest management plans. In addition, there is \$607K for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

BWSR REPORT - Absent

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl attended a meeting last night. They elected the same chair, Jake Janski and went over the budget. They are spending \$133K on administration and in 2025 they have \$700K budgeted for conservation practices. Scholl reminded Wettstein that money is available for projects. Wettstein shared she will remind staff and they are aware, if there is a landowner in that area who is interested to see if there is opportunity with these funds.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared their January meeting was rescheduled until March.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher said they have not had a meeting since the last one he briefed the board on.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update - Wettstein shared they are close to holding a policy meeting but it has not happened yet.

5. Anniversary Year for Morrison SWCD – 65 years on May 6th, 1960 – MASWCD sent the district a congratulations message around the new year and it was a great reminder. Wettstein said if the board has any suggestions on how to celebrate this to let her know. The staff will plan something.
6. Tree Open House – This was held on January 3 all day and throughout the day we had a total of 250 orders. This was in line with last year when we held the open house and the online sale in conjunction with one another. A lot of tree varieties are sold out and so we are closing the sale.
7. PRAP Grant Awarded, up to \$10,000 – Update Employee Policy – BWSR contacted us with this news. After a grant work plan is put together this money will be available.
8. WCA Update – The appeal on the Kalahar-Grissom notice of decision which was made by Marvin Stroschein has been held in abeyance until the TEP review the decision and issue a report. We have until June 1, 2025. This will not require another board decision but Wettstein will brief the board on the TEP findings.
9. Split Rock Studios, Design 1 Schematic preview – The first phase of this design work was presented to the board. The concepts are still basic but the presentation shows the space divided into different sections, each with a different feature. The next phase of design will start developing the narrative of the scenes and the projections.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ACUB Easement Petition for Alteration or Release –Wettstein provided the board the background information for the appeal. This included what an appeal is, how the process works, and the uniqueness of the situation because of the easement type (ACUB Federal). The landowner is requesting the easement boundary be altered to allow for a communications tower in the SW corner of the easement. This portion of the easement is currently an unirrigated corner off a main road which connects to State Highway 371 in between Brainerd and Little Falls. The rest of the easement is farmed and has an irrigation pivot on it, Kroll is not the original owner of the easement. Saehr then asked technical staff for their recommendation. McDonald explained that she believes Kroll does have a case for providing a public benefit if the project moves forward but differed the final decision to the board. Kroll was then given time to explain the reasoning for his appeal to the board. Kroll has been approached by a communications company to build a cell phone tower as they want to construct this tower within 3,000 feet of a historic tower location, and that the property and location in question is the most desired location for the new tower. Tower height will be 200 feet or less, meaning no guide wires and a smaller (100' by 100') footprint for construction. Kroll also stated previous interest in constructing a Real Time Kinematic (RTK) station for his farming practice. This would be a similar tower for personal use that would be allowable under the easement as a structure that supports his operation. He states that the cell tower would allow him to use his RTK station. The board then asked Kroll various follow up questions and discussed each. The questions were about alternate locations for the project, the mechanics of the alteration process and Kroll's plans to address any exchange or payback, the scale of the project, permitting needs, FAA and airspace concerns with proximity to Camp Ripley, the size of the alteration, and the Board's role in the process. After much discussion MSC Scholl/Hubner to recommend approval for the alteration based on the following reasoning in the discussion: Kroll could build his own tower in this location for an RTK station in support of his agricultural practices. He could also utilize the proposed cell tower for this. Per the recommendation of technical staff, the approximate 0.5-acre alteration will be ample size to accommodate the project footprint to include access and the tower pad, while maintaining proper setbacks. Granting a slightly larger area than needed allows for future maintenance while minimizing the risk of boundary violation. The project will provide the public with access to a communications utility as it is located off of State Highway 371 and near the historic tower which will

be phased out. Kroll and the contractor would still be responsible for obtaining all permits and approvals to construct the project. The board also acknowledged that they are just one step in the alteration process, and that their decision was to be solely on whether or not they approve of the alteration from a local perspective. They understand it now moves to the BWSR board for negotiation and final decision. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Ringwelski Retirement – February 28th will be Ringwelski's last day after nearly 37 years as the District Technician and Lead Technician. The board can recognize him at the next meeting and the office will host an open house this same day that afternoon.
3. Conservation Technician Job Posting – With Ringwelski retiring Wettstein would like to backfill his position. MSC Hubner/Brutscher to approve opening the application period. Wettstein asked the Personnel Committee to convene for interviews. Motion passed unanimously. The timeline would be to open this next week, have interviews before the next board meeting so that a recommendation could be given to the full board at the February meeting.
4. Soil Health Practices Grant – Request for Interest - \$180K – Brutscher/Faber to pursue this funding after Wettstein presented the opportunity. This is another RCPP that is being offered for the counties of the state that have over 30 percent of their area in agricultural production. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Final Audit – The board had approved the draft audit. No changes have been made since the draft audit was presented. Faber/Scholl to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
6. MASWCD FY2025 Annual Dues, \$7,431.37 – Brutscher/Hubner to approve payment. Motion passed unanimously. The board and Wettstein feel that the association is doing a good job lobbying for the districts.
7. Split Rock Studios, Design 2 Contract \$23,800 – Wettstein explained that this is the next phase of work for the design of the Camp Ripley Environmental Classroom. The original bidding process was done before they signed the first contract with Split Rock. Wettstein split up the contracts to ensure deliverables and to keep it the project on track with timelines and funding pools. MSC Brutscher/Hubner to approve the contract. Motion passed unanimously.
8. LCCMR Seeking Projects, Possible Oak Wilt Grant – Wettstein explained that this grant application period is open and she is working with Crow Wing SWCD to possibly combine work to submit one proposal on Forest Health activities, including oak wilt. Wettstein will bring more information next meeting. No action is required at this time.
9. Day at the Capitol, March 4-5 – Staff are working on lining up times to meet with our representatives. If any board members are interested in attending, March 4 is the briefing by MASWCD and a social hour and March 5 would be the day the appointments are being made.
10. Soil Health Video Series and Bus Tour, MOSH and NRCS – There is \$15,000 available to the district to do this work. Hansen will be the staff to coordinate these efforts. More information will be provided to the board on the video and tour at a later date.
11. Cost Share Contracts, Cancellations and Payments
 - a. State Cost Share Contracts – MSC Faber/Hubner to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
 - i. Travis Scott \$2,794.43 Forest Stewardship Plan
 - ii. Mike Pohlkamp \$1,853.25 Forest Stewardship Plan
 - iii. Jordan Geise \$997.50 Forest Stewardship Plan
 - b. Soil Health Delivery Cost Share Contracts – MSC Faber/Hubner to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
 - i. Jay Brisk \$1,280.39 Reforestation
 - ii. Doug Carlson \$4,680.00 Reforestation
 - iii. Darin Przybilla \$1,304.25 Reforestation

~~c. Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF Cost Share Contract Cancellation~~

~~i. John Holtz #MRBRD24-03 \$19,250.00 Cover Crops~~

d. Long Prairie WBIF Contract Payment – MSC Faber/Brutscher to approve payment. Motion passed unanimously.

i. Greg Boesel #M-LPWBF-23-04 \$427.50 Well Sealing

INFORMATIONAL

- Rum River Joint Powers Board Meeting, January 23
- MN Campaign Finance Reporting Requirement
- National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention, February 9-13
- Women in Ag Brunch, Bowlus Community Center, Saturday, February 15 from 9:00-12:00
- Winter Agronomy Meeting, Royalton Legion, February 27 from 9:00-12:00
- Contractor Meeting, Morrison County Government Center, March 6
- Day at the Capitol, March 4-5, Appointments with Legislators TBD
- Area 2 Meeting/WCTSA Board Meeting, March 19, Litchfield
- Tentative Tree Pick-up Date, April 25, Little Falls Exchange Arena

MSC Brutscher/Saehr at 10:58 to adjourn to the Awards Luncheon which starts at 11:30. Upon completion of the event at 1:30 the meeting of the board is adjourned.

ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON TO FOLLOW THE MEETING RECOGNIZING THE FOLLOWING:

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Brutscher, Hubner, Faber and Scholl. SWCD Staff: Wettstein, Knopik, Ringwelski, Becker and McDonald; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka, Hanson and Miller; Guests: Doug and Lind Ploof, Betty, Dave, Tyler, Joe and Scott Czech, Stan Musielewicz, Greg and Patricia Cox, Mike Seppelt, Peter Ratka, AJ Nelson and his wife, Moriya Rufer and Luke Herkenhoff.

Awards were presented in this order with Wettstein giving a brief summary of the award and the recipients followed by comments by the award receiver.

- Morrison County Wildlife Habitat Steward Award – Doug and Linda Ploof
- Forest Steward Award – Charlie Ehlen
- Outstanding Conservationists – Czech Family of Czech Dairy
- Special Recognition to the Precipitation Readers – AJ Nelson, Stanley and Geri Musielewicz, Dave Piasecki, Greg and Patricia Cox, Jennifer and Robert Knopik, Don Tschida, William Faber, Paul Oldakowski, Judy Zapzalka, Carrie and Brent Miller, Mike Seppelt, Mike and Joyce Weiss, Peter Ratka, Evelyn Dahmen, Robert Monnens, Pete Brutscher (Represented by Tom Brutscher)
- Morrison SWCD Super Partners – Moriya Rufer and Luke Herkenhoff

On behalf of the SWCD Board and staff a special thank you to all those above and the work that you have done to receive the recognition! The award luncheon presentation ended at 1:30. Pictures were taken of those in attendance.

William Faber, Secretary

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING
Friday, February 28, 2025
USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road, Little Falls
8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Hubner, Brutscher, Saehr and Scholl. Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein, Ringwelski, Hansen and McDonald; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers; Guest: Dan Shaw.

AGENDA- MSC Scholl/Brutscher to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY's MINUTES – Scholl/Brutscher to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER's REPORT– Wettstein reminded the board the administrator of our 4M accounts is available to speak to the board in March. Brutscher/Scholl to accept the treasures report. Motion passes unanimously.

COMMISSIONER's REPORT – Winscher spoke about bird flu, digesters, the jail, Little Rock and said he has been getting a lot of questions about the county budget from residents.

GUEST REPORT –Dan Shaw, Senior Ecologist/Vegetation Specialist from BWSR presented on the Habitat Friendly Utilities Program the district is facilitating on the Franciscan Sisters Property. He also said there has been an 80% decline in the last 20 years in pollinators. The programs available through BWSR which can support pollinator populations, and their habitat include Conservation Easements, Lawn to Legumes, HELP and the Habitat Friendly Utility program. McDonald is the main point of contact with Shaw on the Franciscan Sisters project.

STAFF REPORT – Zapzalka said they are working on CSP applications and finalizing EQIP obligations. Carrie Miller has been working on a national CSP improvement project and it could help the program if it gets implemented. Zapzalka also mentioned we have a new US secretary of agriculture, Brooke Rollins.

BWSR REPORT – Mayer has started a mentorship workshop that technical staff have been invited to be a part of. He also said to expect budget cuts to the county Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program, county and SWCD Buffer programs and Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) payments to landowners.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl said their meeting will be on March 27th.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared they have a meeting coming up on March 20th.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – No update from Brutscher, there have been no meetings.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update - Saehr said they had their first meeting where they approved the Work Plan and Budget for the planning grant.
5. National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention, February 9-13 – Brutscher attended with Knopik. Brutscher spoke on a panel about the importance of staff training. Todd Holman spoke on behalf of the Sentinel Landscape. Troy Daniels, head of MN NRCS received the State Conservationist of the year from NACD. Brutscher said the whole conference had a wet blanket on it due to all of the changes at the federal government level.
6. Women in Ag Brunch, Bowlus Community Center, Saturday, February 15 from 9:00-12:00 – Hansen shared they had 30 women, all ages from 70 to one year in attendance. There were great speakers. She also gave an update on the Winter Agronomy meeting sharing there were 60 people in attendance at that event.
7. MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program Summary- Hansen passed out a summary of the program for 2024. There were six new applicants and no new certifications. The main driver has been that producers that sign up for the program rank higher with the soil health equipment grants MDA has

and they are eligible for the \$5,000 financial assistance cost share each year. She provided a handout on their new flat rate payment rates for the program. Hansen went on to share she helped thirteen producers either fill out a soil health grant application or write a letter of reference. Of these four producers were funded.

8. Federal freezes and layoffs – Wettstein talked about the very dramatic turn of events that has happened at the federal government level in the last few weeks. Federal employees who are considered probationary have been fired and payments for current landowner contracts have been frozen. In addition, grants that have been awarded but not executed are being frozen including the districts CRLS RCPP and BWSR Soil Health funds. Both awards the district was gearing up for and had passed on other funding opportunities to be able to execute. Our current staff are funded primarily with state funds, so this is positive, but our project money is in limbo for several programs until further notice.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ringwelski Retirement Acknowledgement – Saehr acknowledged Alan for his years of service with the district by reflecting on the work he has done over the years starting in 1988 as an intern and then full time in 1989. He thanked him for his service to the organization and the county and then presented him with a gift from the district, a jacket that was embroidered with his years of service, the district's old and new logo and his name. Ringwelski thanked everyone and shared a few stories of some exciting times working for the district. He said he will miss the people.
2. Area 2 Envirothon Donation Request - \$200 – MSC Brutscher/Hubner. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Peterson Company LTD Contract for Annual Audit Services - \$6,150.00 – Wettstein shared that this is an increase from last year's cost of \$5,500 and asked if she should ask for other quotes for the board. The full board agreed Peterson knows our business and has done this work very efficiently compared to past auditors. MSC Saehr/Hubner to enter into contract for the 2024 audit. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Conservation Technician Position – Hubner presented on behalf of the personnel committee regarding the interview process and the candidates that interviewed. There were two very strong applicants who interviewed well for the position. Wettstein shared with all of the people who interviewed that there may be a delay in the offer based on the current events with the federal government. The board talked freely about the uncertainty with federal funding, especially funding that was frozen or not awarded yet. The board would like to see if anything changes over the next month before an offer is extended to a candidate. Wettstein will communicate with them to let them know the decision has been tabled to next month.
5. LCCMR Resolution – Fiscal Agent for Application – Environmental Classroom Exhibit and Outreach – The board expressed concern over acting as the fiscal for this project as Wettstein has enough on her plate for the time being. They would prefer to pass on acting in this role.
6. LCCMR Forest Health Application – Crow Wing SWCD Fiscal Agent – Wettstein explained this application has incorporated our Oak Wilt project as there were sites in Cass and Crow Wing last go around. If Oak Wilt was treated in Morrison County, our landowners can still participate in the program, it would just be Crow Wing SWCD will be handling the payments and funding for the grant.
7. Severance Policy and Payment Recommendation – The current policy says only the sick leave portion of a retiring employee goes into the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP) account while the vacation is paid in a lump sum payment and subject to withholding. Ringwelski requested it all go into his HCSP for tax reasons. MSC Saehr/Brutscher to approve deviating from the Employee Policy Severance Pay on page 34 to allow Ringwelski's severance payment to get deposited into his individual Post-Retirement Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP) account. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Cost Share Contracts, Cancellations and Payments

- a. Rum River Watershed WBIF Recommendation - MSC Scholl/Brutscher to approve. Passed unanimously.
 - i. Todd Monson \$515.40 Field Windbreak
- b. Soil Health Delivery Contracts – MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve. Passed unanimously.
 - i. Randy Tabatt \$2,361.65 Conservation Cover - Pollinator
 - ii. Dennis Herold \$2,385.02 Reforestation
 - iii. Joseph LeBlanc \$660.36 Reforestation
- c. Conservation Contracts – MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve. Passed unanimously.
 - i. Jean Januschka \$4,490.00 Critical Area Planting
 - ii. Justin Jurek \$900.00 Forest Stewardship Plan
- d. Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF - MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve. Passed unanimously.
 - i. Jean Januschka \$2,035.00 Critical Area Planting

INFORMATIONAL

- Winter Agronomy Meeting, February 27th 9-12, Royalton Legion
- Day at the Capitol, March 5 (Appointments with legislators), St. Paul
- Contractor Meeting, March 3, Morrison County Government Center
- Area 2/WCTSA Board Meeting, March 19, Litchfield Eagles Club
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, March 20, Long Prairie
- Rum River Joint Powers Entity Meeting, March 27, Milaca
- Tentative Tree Pick-up Date, April 25, Little Falls Exchange Arena

Meeting adjourned at 10:39. Open House for Ringwelski to follow.

William Faber, Secretary



MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, March 28, 2025 at 8:00 am

USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

ATTENDING IN-PERSON: Supervisors: Faber, Saehr and Scholl. SWCD Staff: Wettstein;
NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers; Guest: Corey Boyer.

AGENDA

SECRETARY MINUTES – MSC Faber/Scholl to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL and TREASURER REPORTS- MSC Scholl/Faber to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

EX-OFFICIO REPORT- Absent.

GUEST REPORTS

1. Corey Boyer, 4M Fund/PMA Financial Network – Boyer went through a presentation explaining the role of 4M as a League of MN Cities program with Joint Powers Agreements with governmental entities of which the Morrison SWCD signed into. He also talked in general about Chapter 118A as the MN statute that governs how Local Government Units can deposit and invest public funds. He then explained that 4M has liquid pools of funds like the money market accounts that allow us to access that money without penalty and pooled term and limited term accounts that have fixed rates for a set period. Right now, money market funds are earning at 4.3% so it is on par with many of the CD rates. This is unusual. He also explained that the only bank they are set up to administer sweep accounts with is US Bank. The board will act on our expiring CDs at the next meeting as they expire the day before the next meeting. Boyer explained that once the CD expires the investment and the interest earned will go into the money market account until the board decides what to do. The money market accounts are not FDIC insured but have a diverse portfolio of conservative investments.
2. NRCS – Zapzalka shared they had six Conservation Stewardship Program applications pre-approved and probationary employees that were fired are being reinstated. He also shared the 2024 Annual Report which highlighted the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape RCPP.
3. BWSR- Mayers shared the state has a deficit so we will see some impacts for the buffer program, but it is unsure yet what that looks like.

NEW BUSINESS

1. CD's Maturing – Wettstein explained that she will bring an estimate of needed cash flow to accommodate the Historical Society project and that she will also get an updated quote from Boyer on CD rates for the different lengths and investment amounts so the board can decide how to move forward.
2. Morrison County Historical Society/Shoreline Restoration Contractor Bid Opening – Wettstein shared the bid opening was held, and three bids were received. All three were well above the engineers' estimate so the Historical Society Board will need to decide how they

Mission: To provide leadership and direct assistance for conservation management of soil and water



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want to move forward with the bids. They can either accept them or reject them. If they accept a bid, they would be giving up other projects that they had planned on using bonding money with. If they reject all bids, then the engineer will revise the plan and repost the packet for another bidding round. Their board meets on the last day of the month so Wettstein will have an update at our next meeting.

3. Conservation Technician Position Vacancy – Wettstein reviewed the current state of grants and funding scenarios considering the recent federal actions. She also reviewed the actual staffing costs with Ringwelski retiring in February and the implications to the budget for that since the original scenario had a full year salary budget for him. With no concrete changes in the federal outlook since last meeting Wettstein presented four different cost scenarios to the board that looked at budget implications of hiring a replacement or keeping it vacant. MSC Saehr/Scholl to move forward with the district offering a position to our top interviewed candidate. If the position is not accepted Wettstein can move forward by offering it to the next highest-ranking candidate. The discussion involved the wetland workload that needs to be addressed and the cost of refilling the position being well below what was originally budgeted for the year for that position. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Annual Report 2024 and Plan of Work 2025 – Wettstein shared the report and asked the board to review. McDonald completed the report the last couple years and it highlights work the district has completed and the opportunities for the coming year. This report is typically shared with the county board but can be shared beyond this.
5. Tree Planter Donation to DNR – Wettstein shared the pull type planter was purchased for the district through the Watershed and Forest Restoration: What a Match! grant funded by LCCMR. DNR Forestry has historically been the office the SWCD has sent landowners to for renting out tree planters and since this model works, we want to promote their program and not create another competing program. MSC Faber/Scholl to approve donating the tree planter. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE- MSC Faber/Scholl to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Item	Type	Grant Source / Contract #	Name	Amount	Practice
1.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Stavish, Jerome	\$637.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
2.	Payment	FY25 Cost Share Contract, #13-25	Jurek, Justin	\$900.00	Forest Stewardship Plan

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3.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Czech, Dave	\$9,625.00	Cover Crop
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SUPERVISOR REPORTS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl shared the board funded our forestry project and that Benton had a feedlot project that was funded. They are now working on the 2025 budget of which half is proposed for projects.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared the meeting is coming up in April.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Wettstein shared the next meeting is in April.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Saeher will be attending the meeting in April.
5. Little Rock Creek Public Meeting, March 13, Rice – Scholl would like to do the update at the next meeting so this discussion could be with the full board and Winscher.
6. Area 2/WCTSA Board Meeting, March 19, Litchfield Eagles Club – Faber, Wettstein and Zapzalka attended this meeting. Chuck Rau from Benton SWCD and MASWCD State Association President gave an update on the federal uncertainty. First District presented the cooperatives sustainability practices and programs withing the milk industry. WCTSA Board approved their annual audit.

MANAGER REPORTS

1. Staffing Updates – For the time being Becker and Wettstein are coving the wetland work that Ringwelski was doing as we are getting into the growing season and requests for permits and wetland boundaries.
2. Contractor Meeting, March 3, Morrison County Government Center – Becker presented at the request of the county for this meeting on wetland rules and law considerations.
3. Legislative Briefing/Day at the Capitol, March 19, St. Paul – Hansen and McDonald visited with Representative Schultz and Representative Wiener. Both legislators were very familiar with MASWCD's position on increasing SWCD Aid need and so they were able to answer additional questions they had about our operations and offerings.
4. MASWCD/NACD Updates for SWCDs – The annual NACD fly-in to Washington DC is happening this week so hopefully there will be additional information coming other than what was mentioned during the meeting already.

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CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

- Rum River Joint Powers Entity Meeting, March 27, Milaca
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, April 17, Long Prairie
- Mississippi Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, April 18th, Royalton City Hall
- Mississippi Brainerd Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, April 28th, Brainerd
- Tree Pick-up Date, Friday April 25, Little Falls Exchange Arena
- Water Plan/Local Work Group, June 4th, Morrison County Courthouse
- Soil Health Bus Tour, August 6th, Benton/Stearns/Morrison Sites
- Green Fair Folk Festival, August 6, 4-8 PM

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- April 25, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- May 23, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- June 27, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM.

William Faber, Secretary

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, April 25, 2025 at 8:00 am

USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

ATTENDING IN-PERSON: Supervisors: Faber, Brutscher, Saehr and Scholl. SWCD Staff: Wettstein; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers; Guest: Alex Fellbaum

AGENDA

SECRETARY MINUTES – MSC Faber/Scholl to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL and TREASURER REPORTS- Wettstein shared a mistake that was found in our signed copies of our past Treasurers Reports and it should be corrected. The actual account balances are correct as were the numbers the auditor used for previous audits. On the signed transcribed summary page prepared for the board meetings the total did not add up, it was not calculating a listed CD investment of \$125,000 during that time period. The corrections have been made and have been reviewed with Faber. MSC Brutscher/Faber to correct the signed Treasurer's Reports from November 2023-January 2025. Motion passed unanimously. The board asked for a copy of QuickBooks report in the future be used instead of the transcribed report they normally see.

MSC Scholl/Brutscher to approve April Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER REPORT- Winscher reported they have been getting more solar requests, and the Carrow Variance was approved to go beyond the capped animal units for the county. They will still have to get a Conditional Use Permit. He also said the state is running a deficit and wants to mandate. The county may be looking at a 15-19 percent increase if this is the case. Extension gave the Farm Family of the Year to the Welle Family. The group also discussed the Little Rock cost estimates for the DNR presented solutions and they were between \$70-44 million dollars.

GUEST REPORTS

1. FSA, Alex Fellbaum, FSA Farm Programs Director for Todd and Morrison Counties - Fellbaum has been with FSA since 2019 serving in Swift, Pope and Douglas. He trained under Jay Backowski in Morrison and is from Morrison County.
2. NRCS – Zapzalka said they had nine additional EQIP contracts approved and may get more. They are currently wrapping up a manure pit closure and an erosion project.
3. BWSR – Mayers shared they are still waiting on the soil health money and in 2026 competitive grants are going to every other year awards.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Morrison County Historical Society/Shoreline Restoration Update – All the bids were rejected by their board, so the directive was to revise the engineered plan and readvertise.
2. Maturing CDs on Thursday April 24 – Wettstein shared the cash flow needs for the district. It will be clearer next month after the above project has a new cost estimate. She would like to wait to put any of the matured CDs into a new term but would rather leave them in the

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money market. She also presented the cash flow needs if the project moves forward that with the reimbursement lag, we may need all those funds liquid.

3. Split Rock Studio Update and Design Development 1 Contract for \$44,200.00- Wettstein presented where the design is for this project. They have now completed Schematic Design II and it features five different themed areas that the room will feature exploring Camp Ripley's history and the environmental features of the area. Faber/Brutscher. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Mississippi Sartell Watershed Plan Writer Contract for \$157,614.00. Sachr shared the policy committee heard a presentation from Houston Engineering, HEI. They were the lowest bidder and have extensive experience in watershed planning, so it is who the policy committee is recommending we enter into contract with. MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve the contract. Motion passed unanimously.
5. NACD Annual Membership Fee \$775.00 – MSC Faber, Brutscher to continue membership within the association. Motion passed unanimously.
6. CWF Soil Health 2024 Cover Crop Contracts and Funding Limitations- Wettstein shared the list of contracts under this pot of money was all of the people who applied for funds, but the total amount was reduced on some of the contracts to be able to give all producers who applied some financial assistance versus only funding a few.

CONSENT AGENDA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve #1-

21. Motion passed unanimously.

Item	Type	Grant Source / Contract #	Name	Amount	Practice
1.	Contract	FY25 Soil Health Delivery	Monson, Todd	\$243.19	Tree Shrub Establishment
2.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Ploof, Doug	\$787.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
3.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Ploof, Doug	\$712.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
4.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Kroll, Duane	\$1,764.95	Cover Crops

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5.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Dalquist, Kyle	\$3,939.65	Cover Crops
6.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Koenig, Matt	\$1,021.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
7.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Kay/Bern Properties LLC	\$1,532.25	Forest Stewardship Plan
8.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Pietrowski, Doug	\$1,621.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
9.	Payment	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF #24-03	Holtz, John	\$17,707.80	Cover Crops
10.	Contract	FY25 Soil Health Delivery	Eno, Mark	\$3,871.85	Tree/Shrub Establishment
11.	Contract	FY25 Conservation Contract	Eno, Mark	\$748.90	Tree/Shrub Establishment
12.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Kroll, Duane	\$14,000.00	Cover Crops
13.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Kroll, Adam	\$14,000.00	Cover Crops
14.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Kroll, Isaac	\$14,000.00	Cover Crops
15.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Kroll, Simon	\$14,000.00	Cover Crops
16.	Contract	FY25 Soil Health Delivery	Rademacher, Gary	\$9,701.43	Cover Crops
17.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Leners, Matthew	\$2,827.00	Cover Crops

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18.	Contract	FY25 Soil Health Delivery	Ripplinger, Keith	\$8,324.15	Cover Crops
19.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Ripplinger, Keith	\$231.10	Cover Crops
20.	Contract	FY24 CWF Soil Health	Czech, Dave	\$2,046.00	Cover Crops
21.	Extension	FY25 Conservation Contracts	Czech, Noah	\$2,136.77	Prescribed Burn

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl shared there is a meeting in June.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared the had a meeting on April 17th and a summary of what has been completed was presented.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher shared they will have a meeting later in April.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Saehr touched on the meeting already with the selection of HEI for the planning contractor.
5. Little Rock Creek Public Meeting, March 13, Rice – This update was done during the commissioner's report.

MANAGER REPORTS

1. MASWCD/NACD Updates for SWCDs – Wettstein said the IRA funds are still frozen, but that contract money is starting to move. Voluntary retirements have reduced NRCS numbers across the state.
2. Nathan Sanoski, Conservation Technician Start Date Monday, April 21 – Wettstein share Sanoski will attend the next months board meeting as today is the tree pick-up.
3. Easement Update – Wettstein shared the quarterly summary with the board that McDonald has been producing.
4. MASWCD Call for Resolutions- Wettstein let the group know it is that time of year to draft resolutions. They would need to be approved by the board, then sent to the Area board before it is included in the statewide review that we do annually prior to the annual association meeting.

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
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CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

- Tree Pick-up Date, April 25, 9-4PM, Little Falls Exchange Arena
- Water Plan/Local Work Group, June 4th, Morrison County Courthouse
- Soil Health Bus Tour, August 6th, Benton/Stearns/Morrison Sites
- Green Fair Folk Festival, August 6, 4-8 PM

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- May 23, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- June 27, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- July 25, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

William Faber, Secretary

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, May 23, 2025 at 8:00 am

USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

ATTENDING IN-PERSON: Supervisors: Faber, Hubner, Brutscher, Saehr and Scholl;
Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein and Sanoski; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR:
absent.

AGENDA - MSC Faber/Brutscher to approve as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY MINUTES – MSC Saehr/Scholl to approve with the addition of Randy Winscher added to the attendance roster. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL and TREASURER REPORTS- MSC Brutscher/Faber to approve May Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER REPORT- Winscher brought up concerns about the nitrate testing clinic and the data that is shared with MDA from those clinics. Wettstein will add this to the agenda for next meeting to discuss. Little Rock was discussed and Scholl asked Wettstein to get a copy of the letter that was sent out by the DNR recently to share with the other commissioners.

GUEST REPORTS

1. NEW STAFF- Nathan Sanoski, Conservation Technician Start Date Monday, April 21. Sanoski introduced himself and his background to the group. He worked for Benton SWCD for 15 years but grew up and lives in Little Falls with his family. He is happy to be here and shared his homemade deer jerky with board.
2. NRCS – Zapzalka shared they are getting projects in the field, getting incentive payments out the door for reduced tillage and he touched on the Big Beautiful Bill/Farm Bill.
3. BWSR – Absent.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Morrison County Historical Society/Shoreline Restoration Contractor Selection – Wettstein shared they hosted a second bid opening due to the Historical Society rejecting all the bids last go around. They did receive two bids and Wettstein expects the Historical Society will be able to move forward with the lowest bid. More information will be provided next month after their board meeting.
2. Split Rock Studio Schematic Design Payment \$23,800.00 – MSC Brutscher/Faber to approve the payment. Motion passed unanimously.

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, May 23, 2025 at 8:00 am

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CONSENT AGENDA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – MSC Brutscher/Hubner to approve items 1-9. Motion passed unanimously.

Item	Type	Grant Source / Contract #	Name	Amount	Practice
1.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 18-25	Herold, Dennis	\$2,385.02	Reforestation
2.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 16-25	Przybilla, Darin	\$1,304.25	Reforestation
3.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 14-25	Brisk, Jay	\$1,280.39	Reforestation
4.	Amendment/Payment	FY25 Conservation Contracts	Czech, Noah	\$2,136.77 \$2,086.15	Prescribed Burn
5.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 15-25	Carlson, Doug	\$3570.02	Reforestation
6.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Brausen, Mike	\$720.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
7.	Cancellation	FY25 Conservation Contract	Frisk, Mark	\$750.00	Tree/Shrub Establishment
8.	Cancellation	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 21-25	Eno, Mark	\$3,871.85	Tree/Shrub Establishment
9.	Cancellation	FY25 Conservation Contract	Eno, Mark	\$748.90	Tree/Shrub Establishment

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl said projects are being considered and will be reviewed at the next JPE meeting in June.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber said next meeting is in July.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher shared he is now serving as Vice-Chair. Next meeting in October.

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4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Saeher said the next meeting is in June.

MANAGER REPORTS

1. MASWCD/NACD Updates for SWCDs - Wettstein shared there are still lots of changes happening on the federal level. The BWSR Soil Health RCPP has been confirmed it is moving forward so this will enable cover crop contracts in 2026 as we are not sure when the money will show up.
2. Tree Pick-up Date, April 25, 9-4PM, Little Falls Exchange Arena – Knopik will be sharing a profit and loss next month but that the tree sale went very good this year with over 30,000 trees going out the door.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

- Nitrate Testing Clinic, Morrison County Courthouse, May 19-23 from 9 AM-4 PM
- Stewardship Day, May 22nd all day, Camp Ripley
- Water Plan/Local Work Group, June 4th, Morrison County Courthouse
- Mississippi River Sartell Policy Committee Meeting, June 11, 8:30-10:30 Watab Town Hall
- Rum River Joint Powers Board Meeting, June 26 4:30 PM, Mille Lacs County Courthouse
- Morrison County Fair, June 26-29
- Long Prairie Policy Committee Meeting, July 17 9:00 AM, Todd County Courthouse
- Soil Health Bus Tour, August 6th, Benton/Stearns/Morrison Sites
- Green Fair Folk Festival, August 6, 4-8 PM

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- June 27, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- July 25, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- August 22, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls

Meeting adjourned at 9:56 AM.

William Faber, Secretary

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, June 27, 2025, at 8:00 am

USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

ATTENDING IN-PERSON: Supervisors: Brutscher, Saehr and Scholl; Commissioner: absent; SWCD Staff: Wettstein, McDonald and Knopik; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers; FSA Staff: Fellbaum; Public: Duane Kroll.

AGENDA - MSC Brutscher/Scholl to move the discussion about nitrate testing on posted agenda item number five to first item under New Business. Motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY MINUTES – MSC Scholl/Brutscher to approve as written. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL and TREASURER REPORTS- MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve June Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER REPORT- Absent.

GUEST REPORTS

1. FSA – Fellbaum informed everyone that it is county committee election time, and they are seeking nominations. Also said the CRP sign-up is closed and they are waiting to hear who they will be able to work with. Acreage reporting is underway and there is a program for Supplemental Disaster for 2023/2024.
2. NRCS- Zapzalka said they recently had two more animal mortality facilities funded. Staff are working on overseeing construction, surveying and planning for next year.
3. BWSR – Soil Health RCPP monies will be here in July or August. Mayers shared he has also been working to provide guidance on open meeting law for watershed groups so he will have that to us shortly, a new BWSR calculator that can estimate forestry practice nutrient reductions will be available soon and he shared a flyer on the next Governance Training date which will be held September 10 and 11 in St. Cloud.

NEW BUSINESS

1. MDA Nitrate Machine, Clinic Data and Disclaimer Review – This agenda item was tabled from last meeting as the concern was brought up by Winscher that he has taken calls regarding landowner data from our nitrate clinic being shared with Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Wettstein explained it is MDA's machine that we use for the clinic. Landowners fill out a survey when they come to have their water tested and it does have a disclaimer at the top that explains how the data will be used. After each clinic staff do send the MDA the summary of number of tests run with the breakdown of the results. This comes with a static map that has a pin where the location was in the county with a legend that color codes if they are between 0-4.9, 5-9.9 or greater than 10 parts per million nitrate-nitrogen. Saehr then invited Duane Kroll to speak to his concerns and his reason for attendance on this item. Kroll identified the recent mailing from the MDA which insulted farmers and is a result of nitrate testing data that is misleading. He discussed the Township Testing program which the MDA and the district participated in back in 2016 that has set

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the stage for potential additional regulation on farmers application of nitrogen. He went through the original well driller log information that is available in Agram Township to see what the well drillers reported to the MDH on nitrate levels on the wells at the time of drilling. He found the number of wells with nitrates is much lower than those reported in the Township Testing data. He understands that this is not something the district is responsible for, but he wants the board to hear and understand that this is happening.

2. Morrison County Historical Society/Shoreline Restoration Contractor Selection – Wettstein shared that the Morrison County Historical Society Board has signed a contract with Sunram Construction out of Corcoran. They were the lowest bidder in the second round. During the first round, the historical society rejected all the bids as they were too far over budget. It is unsure when the project will start as they are waiting for one final permit from the Army Corps and the tribal State Historical Preservation Office.
3. Mississippi River Sartell Landscape Stewardship Plan – We have been approached by the DNR to act as the fiscal agent for this plan which serves as supplemental information to the Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Plan. Since we are the fiscal for that process, it is expected that we will serve in this capacity. This work will have to be bid out so we will facilitate that process and select a contractor to do the plan writing and map work. Wettstein explained that she will bring this to the next meeting once we have a contract to review.
4. BWSR Soil Health NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Ranking Policy – Wettstein explained before we can access these funds, we will have to approve a policy which outlines how we will rank individual applications. BWSR has provided a list of questions that must be asked including “Are they an underserved producer.” After going through the questions, the board agreed to review for the next meeting. Wettstein will send the information electronically to all the board members for consideration.
5. Nitrate Testing Clinic, Morrison County Courthouse, May 19-23 from 9 AM-4 PM – McDonald prepared the summary, and it showed that the last two clinics were not very well attended compared to past clinics. This spring 61 wells were tested. Wettstein shared that we are planning to move the clinic back to the district office because with participation lower, it doesn’t make sense to staff it over at the courthouse.
6. Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape NRCS RCPP Award Rescinded – This award which was announced in November last year is no longer available to the district. Wettstein explained with the changes at the federal level that even though we thought this money had a better chance of making it to us due to it being Farm Bill Funding when IRA or Inflation Reduction Act funding was cancelled NRCS decided to go back to the highest-ranking projects on their list from last round. We, unfortunately, did not make the cut. This means staffing workload will be affected due to the lack of funding for projects.

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7. Sub Award Agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – Wettstein shared that once we shared news with our partners that our RCPP funding was rescinded, a group from TNC reached out to us to see if we could help them execute on forestry practice money they have. They had received a USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities grant but it was rescinded due to federal changes. They were recently informed the funding would be accessible again but, in the meantime, had lost the staffing capacity to execute the original deliverables of the grant. The district does have a list of projects that were queued up for the RCPP which could be funded through a subaward with TNC. Wettstein asked the board if they would support us continuing the discussion with TNC. They supported the idea with the request for the next meeting that more information be provided regarding the subaward.

CONSENT AGENDA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – Saeher questioned the extension and amendment on number five so Wettstein explained with the cancellations recently there would be more money available for this project. The American Legion Board is still very interested in completing the project and have asked if there were additional funds to help pay for the project as their bids have come in higher than expected. The amount listed below is still below 75 percent that the district tries to get landowners. Brutscher asked about the correction on number two. Wettstein said that was an error she had made on last meeting's agenda that Knopik had caught. This corrects the payment amount for Carlson to what it should be. MSC Brutscher/Scholl to approve numbers one through nine. Motion passed unanimously.

Item	Type	Grant Source / Contract #	Name	Amount	Practice
1.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 13-25	Determan, Robert	\$881.90	Field Windbreak
2.	Correction/Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery SHD 15-25	Carlson, Doug	\$3570.02 3,797.87	Reforestation
3.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Ploof, Peter	\$487.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
4.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Ploof, Peter	\$750.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
5.	Amendment/Extension	FY24 FY25 Conservation Contract #10-24/01-25	American Legion Post 350	\$4,408.84 \$7,407.74	Critical Area Planting

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6.	Cancellation	FY25 Conservation Contract #07-25	Friends of Crane Meadows	\$1,500.00	Conservation Cover
7.	Payment	FY25 Conservation Contract #09-25	Scott, Travis	\$2,266.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
8.	Payment	FY25 Conservation Contract #10-25	Pohlkamp, Mike	\$1,692.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
9.	Payment	FY25 Conservation Contract #11-25	Geise, Jordan	\$1,320.00	Forest Stewardship Plan

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update- Scholl reported that the group has \$584K to spend by January 1, 2026, so the group has approved policies that will allow money to be moved easier so it can get spent down by that timeline including a slush fund and a staff person authorized to move monies around. He also shared the projects Morrison had on the list were all approved. The policy committee also rejected the right to use WBIF funds for buckthorn control.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – No new updates other than the meeting scheduled for July will be cancelled.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher said their next meeting is in October.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Saehr shared the group will be hosting their plan kick-off in July. He also said they are looking for members from the public or organizations to be on the Citizen Committee.

MANAGER REPORTS

1. MASWCD/NACD Updates for SWCDs – No new updates.
2. MPCA Feedlot Rule Making Process, June 3, Morrison County Courthouse – Wettstein and Hubner attended, and they invited comments on the rule and have initiated this formal process due to lawsuits from environmental groups that have said the state isn't doing enough to protect water quality. The audience expressed concern over the two main agencies who regulate fertilizer, MPCA with manure and the MDA with commercial fertilizer, why they can't work together and show what is being done well instead of turning towards farmers for the solutions.

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3. Tree Week Summary – Knopik presented the Tree Profit and Loss and year 2024 vs. 2025 comparison for the tree program. She reminded the group since we did not handle the DNR customer orders this year we handled a lot less trees, but it felt manageable and was much less taxing on the staff this year. The net income increased over last year even with about thirty less district customer orders.
4. Water Plan/Local Work Group, June 4th, Morrison County Courthouse – Brutscher attended this on behalf of the board, as did all staff. This is an annual meeting the district hosts to share successes and discuss priorities for the next year. The Local Work Group meeting must be held each year before August as an NRCS requirement.
5. WCA Update – Wettstein briefed the board that next meeting we will have the Kalahar/Stroschein/Darling Township Cartway on the agenda, with an August 1 deadline set by BWSR in their Appeal Remand.
6. Land Trust Alliance Rally, September 3-7 – McDonald submitted an abstract for presentation at this conference and was selected to present in Ohio this fall. Wettstein invited the board to consider attending if they are interested. More information to come.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

- Rum River Joint Powers Board Meeting, June 26 4:30 PM, Mille Lacs County Courthouse
- Morrison County Fair, June 26-29
- ~~Long Prairie Policy Committee Meeting, July 17 9:00 AM, Todd County Courthouse~~
- Soil Health Bus Tour, August 6th, Benton/Stearns/Morrison Sites
- Green Fair Folk Festival, August 6, 4-8 PM

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- July 25, 2025, at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- August 22, 2025, at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- September 26, 2025, at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 AM.

William Faber, Secretary

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MEETING MINUTES

Morrison SWCD Regular Board Meeting
Friday, July 25, 2025, at 8:00 am

USDA Service Center, 16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

ATTENDING IN-PERSON: Supervisors: Brutscher, Faber, Hubner and Scholl; Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein and Becker; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers; Public: Marvin and Tim Stroschein.

AGENDA - MSC Faber/Hubner to approve the agenda with the addition of the MOA with Camp Ripley with Morrison SWCD- Renewal under New Business. Motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY MINUTES – MSC Hubner/Scholl to approve as written. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL and TREASURER REPORTS- MSC Scholl/Faber to approve July's Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER REPORT- Winscher said very few permits have been coming out of the county for feedlot expansions. He also said it is budget season for the county, he has been complaints about crop spraying, and he was able to look at the Little Rock information from the DNR.

GUEST REPORTS

1. NRCS- Zapzalka said additional monies have been coming in. He also brought up the challenges of some diseases that are affecting turkey and hogs.
2. BWSR – Soil Health RCPP monies will be here in August. Conservation Contract, Buffer and Soil Health monies will show up in August as well. He also shared to training opportunities coming up, the Governance Training date which will be held September 10 and 11 in St. Cloud and a Silvopasture Clinic in September.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ellen Kalahar-Grissom TEP Findings Presentation and Notice of Decision – A summary of this agenda item was given by Wettstein, outlining the initial application, decision, appeal and BWSR rescind. She explained the role the board had in the process and that the deadline to get our decision back to BWSR is August 1. The TEP Findings were sent to everyone on Wednesday after the TEP signed on Tuesday and the reason for the late signing was related to the latest information submitted by Stroschein's and how to proceed. Wettstein had asked for an extension from both parties to be able to process the new boundary application submitted but Stroschein did not consent to an extension. As part of the hearing, Wettstein had invited both Kalahar-Grissom and Stroschein to attend and present but Kalahar-Grissom was not comfortable attending. Brutscher gave Marvin Stroschein 10 minutes to present before clarifying questions from the board. Stroschein explained he has hired three private consultants to review this area and that the last delineator took more soil borings and did not find fill. This firm also presented a survey as part of their work. He said 230th Street has always been the road into this property. He also said his delineators have told him this is setting a precedence if we allow this to happen.

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Scholl asked Stroschein how this would affect him? Stroschein said it would flood his pasture and it splits their farm in half. Scholl asked how long ago was this a usable road? Stroschein replied it has never been a usable road since 1930. Hubner asked about the culverts that are evidenced in this area, the ditch work and old aerial maps as evidence of the road. Stroschein said those culverts were only there to drain the wetland. Scholl commented that he had read through the file and that the township did everything right and had a very good attorney representing them on the establishment of the cartway. Scholl also said the TEP found evidence of the road and that the TEP findings were very well done. MSC Scholl/Faber to accept the TEP Findings as written. Motion passed unanimously. MSC Faber/Hubner to issue the decision as a no loss due to evidence of the road and the incidental wetland definition as defined in the TEP Report. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Mississippi River Sartell Landscape Stewardship Plan – Fiscal Role – Wettstein explained the connection between this plan and the One Watershed One Plan process, and also how this will provide additional information on the forestry within the watershed. Since we are the fiscal for the 1W1P, we have been asked to be the fiscal for this. MSC Faber/Hubner to act as fiscal. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Landscape Stewardship Plan Bid Opening- Wettstein said once she has a contract from DNR to do this work she will move forward with the contract RFP for the plan writing and mapping. The goal would be to post this for three weeks and have the bid opening at our next board meeting. MSC by Hubner/Scholl to advertise this work after we have an executed contract. Motion passed unanimously.
4. BWSR Soil Health NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Ranking Policy – This item was tabled from the last meeting to double check on the requirement of having some of the questions on the form. It was confirmed by BWSR that those questions do have to be on the form such as the Historically Underserved Farmer/Rancher. MSC Faber/Hubner to approve the presented ranking form. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Sub Award Agreement with The Nature Conservancy – Wettstein gave an update to the board that since the last board meeting, she has continued discussions with their staff. TNC is checking with NRCS on which forestry practices would qualify but their initial feedback to the district looks good with many of the practices lining up with what local landowners are interested in doing here. Wettstein clarified that the funds would be available statewide but that TNC is willing to do a sub award for the amount of \$130K for staff time to do this work and that payments would actually be made directly from TNC to landowners, not from the district. This makes it administratively less burdensome. No action is needed at this time, but it is shaping out to be a good opportunity. Mayers expressed interest in funding availability for other districts if this does work out as he is having conversations with other districts looking for forestry practices funding.

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6. 2026 Budget and County Request for Assistance Funds or \$150,000 – MSC Scholl/Faber to request \$150,000 from the county for 2026. Wettstein explained this amount is the same amount now for the last few years, it is not an increase. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Split Rock Studios Invoice Payment for Design Development 1 Completion - \$44,200.00 – Wettstein shared a publication called Allies published by the MN Military and Veterans Museum as it had pictures of the museum during construction and final renditions. Wettstein shared she had toured the space and was able to see the location of the future Environmental Classroom. The recent invoice reflects the third of four phases of design work the studio is doing on the space. MSC Faber/Scholl to approve payment. Motion passed unanimously. Wettstein said they do not currently have funding to complete the last phase of design but she is hoping it will be available soon. No new work will be done until that time.
8. Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Rally Attendance – Wettstein asked for approval for Scott Saehr to attend this conference in Cleveland Ohio this September where the district has been invited to present on the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape work McDonald is involved in. MSC Hubner/Faber to approve Saehr attending and associated expenses. Motion passed unanimously.
9. Memorandum of Understanding with Camp Ripley and Morrison SWCD – Renewal – Wettstein shared they have had an MOU because Lew Noska has had his office at Camp Ripley with the Environmental Staff as part of the work he is facilitating with NRCS, private landowners and our office. This MOU is good for one year. MSC Scholl/Faber to authorize signing. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – MSC Faber/Hubner to approve 1-13.
Motion passed unanimously.

Item	Type	Grant Source / Contract #	Name	Amount	Practice
1.	Cancellation	FY24 Conservation Contracts #05-24	Roberts, Lee	\$994.12	Critical Area Planting
2.	Correction	FY25 Conservation Contract #11-25	Geise, Jordan	\$1,320.00 \$990.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
3.	Payment	FY25 Conservation Contract #12-25	Januschka-Ebnet, Jean	\$4,490.00	Critical Area Planting

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4.	Payment	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF #24-04	Januschka-Ebnet, Jean	\$2,035.00	Critical Area Planting
5.	Payment	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF #24-11	Koenig, Matt	\$1,021.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
6.	Payment	FY24 FY25 Conservation Contract #10-24/01-25	American Legion Post 350	\$7,407.74	Critical Area Planting
7.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery #20-25	Monson, Todd	\$243.19	Tree Shrub Establishment
8.	Payment (Payment Approved by Rum JPE 6/26/25)	FY25 Rum WBIF MSWCD	Monson, Todd	\$240.00	Tree Shrub Establishment
9.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Surma, Mary Nona	\$1,050.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
10.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Pantzke, Joel	\$637.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
11.	Contract	FY24 Mississippi River Brainerd WBIF	Retka, Gordon	\$1,027.50	Forest Stewardship Plan
12.	Payment	FY25 Soil Health Delivery	LeBlanc, Joseph	\$660.36	Reforestation
13.	Contract	FY24 Conservation Contract	Girtz, Nathan	\$581.25	Well Decommissioning

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update- Scholl said there have been no new meetings.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared the July was cancelled.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher said their next meeting is in October.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Wettstein shared the group will be hosting their plan kick-off in July.

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MANAGER REPORTS

1. MASWCD/NACD Updates for SWCDs – Wettstein shared that with so many changes, losses in staff and renaming of funding there may be opportunities for the district. She currently is in discussions with US Fish and Wildlife about potential wetland restoration funds, NRCS for staffing funding and NACD.
2. Morrison County Almanac – Public Stories – Wettstein shared a few of the stories that people wrote down at the count fair. The district has cards with different questions prompting them to share stories of different experiences they have had with nature, farming, wildlife or conservation efforts. Stories can be submitted to the district all this year as part of our 65th Anniversary and may be published in the Morrison County Record.
3. Minnesota Water Resources Conference, October 14-15 – Becker submitted an abstract and was selected to present at this conference. He will be speaking on the engineering techniques the district and WCTSA used on the recent stream restoration projects.
4. ACUB Easement Quarterly Update – McDonald prepared the quarterly update for the board.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

- Soil Health Bus Tour, August 6th, Benton/Stearns/Morrison Sites
- Green Fair Folk Festival, August 6, 4-8 PM
- Land Trust Alliance Rally, September 3-7
- SWCD Governance 101, September 10-11, Holiday Inn and Suites, St. Cloud
- Minnesota Water Resources Conference, October 14-15
- MASWCD Annual Convention, December 1-3, Bloomington

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- August 22, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- September 26, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls
- October 24, 2025 at 8:00 am, USDA Service Center, Little Falls

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 AM.

William Faber, Secretary

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