



Root River Soil and Water Conservation District

Agricultural Service Center

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MINUTES OF THE ROOT RIVER SWCD

March 12, 2026

The Root River Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on March 12, 2026 at the Ag Service Center in Caledonia, Minnesota for its regular meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Feldmeier at 1:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Joe Driscoll
Matt Feldmeier
Glenn Kruse
Jerry Welke

Members Not Present:

Ken Anderson

Others:

Dave Walter, Jean Meiners, Dan Wermager and Janice Messner – SWCD staff; Julie Olinger, Farm Service Agency (FSA); Bob Scanlan, MN Department of Ag.

Those present took part in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence in remembrance of past board supervisor Roger Stenhoff.

Minutes: **Motion** by Kruse, seconded by Driscoll, approving the minutes from the February 12, 2026 board meeting.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

Employee Time Records & Supervisor Per Diem: **Motion** by Driscoll, seconded by Kruse, approving the Employee Time Records and Supervisor Per Diems.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

Treasurer's Monthly Report: Welke recommended the February 2026 treasurer's report be placed on file for audit.

AGENCY REPORTS

Julie Olinger, Farm Service Agency Report

- Olinger shared the sign up period for the Farmer's Bridge Assistance Program is currently open and will close April 17, 2026. It is 100% assistance on certified 2025 crops. Assistance for specialty crops such as fruits and vegetables is expected to be coming. Again the crops must have been certified in 2025 to qualify for assistance.
- Olinger stated SDRP (Supplemental Disaster Relief Program), two phase crop insurance, is available.
- Olinger indicated a CCRP sign up is available until March 20, 2026 and a general CRP sign up is available until April 17, 2026. There must be cropping history for four out of the past six years to qualify for enrollment. The average rate per acre for CCRP is \$198.00 and \$187.00 per acre for general CRP.

Olinger exited the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

Ryan Hytry, NRCS Report

Feldmeier shared Hytry's written report stating:

- EQIP application ranking deadline is March 20, 2026. Applications should be preapproved in the beginning of April.
- CRP renewal status reviews for 2026 expiring contracts deadline is March 20, 2026.
- Hytry has been covering NRCS office in Lewiston two to three days per week. This will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Papenfuss is also assisting with EQIP and CRP for the Lewiston field office but has been staying in the Caledonia office.

Dave, Walter, District Manager Report

- Walter reported Root River SWCD will be receiving \$255,000 in cover crop cost share funds with additional dollars for technical assistance.
- Walter shared Fillmore SWCD is applying for a climate smart grant to replace the Alliance grant. If the application is successful it will offer cost share for three watersheds which will include Root River.
- Walter stated there is also a Feedlot grant for \$131,500 available to us. This is at 75% cost share and it can be piggy backed with other state and/or federal funding. Applications for these cost share dollars must be ranked.

PROGRAM REPORTS

- **WCA** – Walter reported there is no update but monthly meetings are held.
- **Buffer Law** – Walter stated he and Meiners attended a meeting in Rochester, MN to review new buffer updates. Where public waters are located buffers must be in place on each side of the public waters. Counties and watershed districts can now opt in or opt out of performing enforcement. If they do so BWSR will do the enforcement. Also, BWSR can revoke a county of watershed district's enforcement option.
- **MDA Spring Grove Twp. Walkover** – Scanlan reported he has started doing walkovers in Black Hammer Township. He plans to host another township meeting for Spring Grove and Black Hammer Township producers within the next couple of months. Scanlan shared he is encouraging producers to sign up for EQIP funding to do feedlot fixes. A comprehensive nutrient management plan and feedlot fix design are needed for an EQIP funding sign up.

MASWCD & MACDE - Walter shared the SE MACDE Spring meeting will be held Tuesday, March 24, 2026 in Red Wing, MN. Three staff plan to attend.

WATERSHED UPDATES

Bear Creek – No report.

Crooked Creek – Meiners shared Crooked Creek Watershed District is interested in having a joint website with Root River SWCD. Discussion followed with a review of other SWCD websites and what our page looks like on the county's website. ADA compliance and BWSR requirements were shared. Pricing through Fillmore County Journal is \$7,000 for a four year contract. Supervisors asked Meiners to see how much the Watershed District is willing to contribute financially to a website.

Scanlan exited the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Root River 1W1P – Wermager shared the Policy Committee met February 23, 2026. The main focus was the plan update which is being put together by Rachel Olm at HEI.

Winnebago – No report.

WinLaC 1W1P – No report.

PROGRAM & STAFF REPORTS:

Jean Meiners, Technician

- **MDA Private Well Mitigation (RO Systems)** – Meiners shared an educational video has been produced on RO system maintenance. Houston County has had 34 systems installed.
- **MDH Safe Drinking Water Tap-In** – Meiners stated there is a new RFP for new well construction/repair. These cost share funds are for projects that an RO system will not be enough of a fix. Meiners stated there is still cost share available through a prior grant for repairs to a current well.
- **MDH Well Inventory Grant** – Meiners reported she has mailed 153 letters to Black Hammer Township landowners. Meiners proposed a grant amendment totaling \$58,800 to continue the workload covering the entire county.
- **BMP Projects** – No report.

Dan Wermager, Technician

- **Alliance Grant** – Wermager shared the current workload consists of data input and amending contracts for maps. He also stated Round 1 final payments were to be disbursed March 13, 2026.
- **ARPA** – No report.
- **Soil Health Delivery Grant** – Wermager stated this is a new cost share grant that will be used primarily for cover crops. Currently there are three applicants all of which have not tried cover crops in the past.
- Wermager shared information on incentive payments for prairie strips.

Janice Messner, Administrative Assistant

- **Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network** – No report.
- **Trees** – Messner reported tree sales are slow. To date 50 orders have been placed totaling 3,500 trees. Messner reviewed the availability of various tree species. She stated she will be doing a mass emailing in an attempt to increase orders being received.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE: No report.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: No report.

TSA7 (Joint Powers) COMMITTEE: No report.

OLD BUSINESS – Walter reported the 2017 GMC sold for \$14,000. He will be looking into lettering, side boxes and deck box for the 2025 GMC.

NEW BUSINESS & ACTION ITEMS

Motion by Driscoll, seconded by Kruse, approving the \$20 registration fee for each staff member attending the SE MACDE Spring Meeting.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Kruse, seconded by Driscoll, approving the SE MACDE 2026 Membership Dues of \$10 per staff member

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAMS

ARPA – (Spending expiration 12/31/2026) Available Funds **\$ 6,469.39**

The SWCD Board acknowledged funds totaling \$1,500.00 for a Push Up Pond with pipe are being allocated for Ron Wilkes.

SOIL HEALTH DELIVERY GRANT (Funding \$40.00/acre single specie cover crop; \$50.00/acre multi-specie cover crop)
FY26 Soil Health Delivery Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2028) Available Funds: **\$20,000.00**

FY26 Soil Health Delivery Cost Share Request (\$40.00/acre single specie; \$50.00/acre multi specie)

Name	Contract	Total Cost Estimate	Cost Share Amount Requested	Project	Completion Date
Onsgard, Sean	01FY26SHD	50 acres @ \$40.00/acre – single specie	\$2,000.00	340 – Cover Crop	11/1/2026
Klinski, Jason	02FY26SHD	65 acres @ \$40.00/acre – single specie	\$2,600.00	340 – Cover Crop	11/1/2026
Von Arx, Clint	03FY26SHD	36 acres @ \$40.00/acre – Single specie	\$1,440.00	340 – Cover Crop	11/1/2026

Motion by Kruse, seconded by Driscoll, approving contract #01FY26SHD Onsgard, Sean 340 – Cover Crop \$2,000.00 – single specie \$40/acre @ 50 acres; #02FY26SHD Klinski, Jason 340 – Cover Crop - \$2,600.00 – single specie \$40/acre @ 65 acres; #03FY26SHD Von Arx, Clint 340 – Cover Crop \$1,440.00 – single specie \$40/acre @ 36 acres.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

1W1P ROOT RIVER WATERSHED-BASE IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING PROGRAM (Funding up to 90% of cost estimate with or without other non-state funding source)

FY24 Root River 1W1P Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2026) Available Funds **\$ 24,254.66**

FY26 Root river 1W1P Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2028) Available Funds **\$256,764.00**

Conservation Contracts (Funding up to 90% of cost estimate with or without other non-state funding source)

FY26 Conservation Contracts (Grant expiration 12/31/2028) Available Funds **\$21,720.80**

FY27 Conservation Contracts (Grant expiration 12/31/2028) Available Funds **\$23,690.00**

MDH TAP-IN COST SHARE FUNDING PROGRAM (Funding at 50% or 100% of cost estimate)

MDH Tap- In Cost Share Grant (Grant expiration 4/1/2027) Funds Available

WINLAC 1W1P COST SHARE PROGRAM (Funding percentage based on ranking)

FY25 WinLaC 1W1P Ag Practices Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2027) Available Funds **\$24,500.00**

FY25 WinLaC 1W1P Non-Structural Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2027) Available Funds **\$7,500.00**

FY25 WinLaC 1W1P Vegetative Management & Pollinator Planting Cost Share (Grant expiration 12/31/2027) Available Funds **\$5,000.00**

WinLaC 1W1P CRP (Grant expiration 12/31/2026) Available Funds **\$2,000.00**

*****Accounts Payable: *****

Voucher #	Item	Amount
5135	Ron Carlsen – Rent – March	\$ 1,287.00
5136	Kwik Trip – Fuel – SWCD Trucks	\$ 135.48
5137	VISA – Vehicle Maintenance Wiper Blades Dodge = \$50.00; Wiper fluid = \$8.53; MDH Well Inventory Postage = \$205.92; Postage = \$106.08	\$ 370.53
5138	Talcott Resolution Life & Annuity Ins. Co. – Life Insurance – Policy #LU1188704 Dave Walter	\$ 90.00
5139	Anderson, Ken – Mileage – 1st Qtr.	\$ 34.80
5140	Driscoll, Joe – Mileage – 1st Qtr.	\$ 86.27
5141	Feldmeier, Matt – Mileage – 1st Qtr.	\$ 130.50
5142	Kruse, Glenn – Mileage – 1st Qtr.	\$ 126.15
5143	Welke, Jerry – Mileage – 1st Qtr.	\$ 124.70
5144	SE MACDE – 2026 Dues = \$40.00; Spring Mtg Registration = \$60.00	\$ 100.00
	Total	\$ 2,485.43
	Transfer of funds from Cash General Fund to Eitzen State Bank Acct #10033563 Capital Equipment	\$ 14,000.00

Motion by Driscoll, seconded by Kruse, approving payment of the above accounts payable and transfer of funds.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

***** WinLaC 1W1P Accounts Payable *****

Voucher #	Item	Amount
62	Goodhue SWCD – FY25 Education – 2025 Fall Media Campaign w/Zumbro Watershed - KTTC	\$ 2,500.00
	Total	\$ 2,500.00
	Transfer of funds from Eitzen State Bank Acct # 9623 (FY25) to Cash General Fund	\$ 2,500.00

Motion by Driscoll, seconded by Welke, approving payment of the above accounts payable and transfer of funds.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Feldmeier, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Welke, seconded by Kruse to adjourn the meeting.

Voting affirmative: Driscoll, Kruse and Welke

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

NEXT MEETING -- Regular Meeting, April 9, 2026, 1:00 p.m. Ag Service Center

Approved: April 9, 2026
Date

Joe Driscoll
Secretary

Original signed document is available upon request at Root River Soil & Water Conservation District.