



Who we are as an organization – Mille Lacs SWCD is applying a civic governance approach to SWCD actions and activities. The work of the SWCD and the outcomes of its activities will produce a base of active citizens with common interest in sustainable soil & water conservation. All stakeholders are committed to organize, educate, and apply policy according to principles and standards instituted in democracy.

Frequently Used Acronyms:

(1W1P) One Watershed, One Plan (BWSR program)

(BMP) Best Management Practice

(BWSR) Board of Water & Soil Resources

(CWF) Clean Water Fund

(FSP) Forest Stewardship Plan

(JPA, E or C) Joint Powers Agreement, Entity or Collaborative)

(RRWP) Rum River Watershed Partnership

(MRSC) Mississippi River St. Cloud

(SRWPP) Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership

(LGU) Local Government Unit

(MASWCD) MN Assn. of Soil & Water Cons. Districts

(MLBO) Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

(MLLWG) Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group

(MLSWCD) Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District

(NACD) National Association of Conservation Districts

(NRCS) Natural Resources Conservation Service

(PFM) Private Forest Management

(TSA 3) Technical Service Area 3 – SWCD Engineering

(MAWQCP) MN Ag. Water Quality Certification Program

(WBIF) Watershed Based Implementation Funds

(WCA) Wetland Conservation Act

(WSP) Woodland Stewardship Plan

Mille Lacs SWCD Board Meeting – MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse, Conference Room D with remote option for the public.

**Members Present:**

Chair, Jake Janski, District 3

Treasurer, Andre LaSalle, District 4

Secretary, Tim Braun, District 2

Member, Robert Hoefert, District 5

**Members Absent:**

Vice-Chair, Dan Campbell, District 1

**Staff Present:**

District Administrator, Susan Shaw

Financial Specialist, Pam Kuhn

**Participating Guests:**

Commissioner Liaison, Jay Munson

NRCS District Conservationist, Barb Zeroth

**Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance** – Janski called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

**1. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

Policy 2025-01: “A conflict of interest whether actual or perceived occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to identify any potential conflicts of interest they may have regarding today’s business.”

Supervisors were requested to identify any real or perceived conflicts of interest they may have regarding meeting business. The conflict-of-interest declaration form was provided to each for signature.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion by Hoefert to approve the agenda.** Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

**3. Open Public Forum**

Policy 2025-02: Board policy limits public forum time for board meeting topics not scheduled within the agenda to 2 minutes per person but allows time extension by board vote.

Cynthia Johnson introduced herself as having property in the area, and being interested in conservation, came to learn about the activities of the SWCD.

**4. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approve January 8, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Information Only: Partner Reports, Project Summaries, News Release

**Motion by LaSalle to approve the consent agenda.** Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun.  
Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

**5. Organizational Business**

- A. NRCS Civil Rights Discussion ..... (tabled)  
Barb Zeroth noted that federal employees have been told they are not to take trainings at this time in order to get updated guidance on materials. Work has also been paused for IRA payment processes. It’s likely a good idea to table the materials for now. Janski agreed the materials may change. There is nothing that compels the board to act at this time.

**6. Strategic Implementation**

**A. Rum River Watershed**

- 1. Partnership (RRWP) Board - Janski (Braun)/staff..... Janski report  
Janski reported the partnership board met for the reorganizational meeting January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Janski will be the chair. Molly Clyne did a nice year-end review of her work. The staff led Implementation Policy Committee meeting was held Feb 10<sup>th</sup>. FY23 funds are encumbered to implementation goals but 58% is not yet spent. These funds are planned to be spent before Dec 31, 2025, and before we get into the FY25 grant. New project tracking software is being implemented to develop a map of the watershed and make implementation progress publicly available more rapidly. A year end progress report for 2024 is in development and should be in hand by SWCD Legislative Day at the Capitol.  
The partnership will be doing an online tree workshop on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> and hosting watershed wide well water nitrate screening clinics April 7-11th so that anyone interested won’t have to go far.  
Shaw will be at the MLC board Tuesday to present an overview of the Rum partnership and answer questions.
- 2. Community Conversations (Molly Clyne – lead)
  - i. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership (Type B outreach)
- 3. Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts (Lynn Gallice – lead)
  - i. Aitkin SWCD drone survey of Mille Lacs Lake ..... presentation by Lynn Gallice  
Ms. Gallice provided an example of the data collected by Aitkin SWCD from aerial images that ranked parcels around Mille Lacs Lake based on a set of criteria used to evaluate shoreland BMP need. The images were collected as an efficient way to identify need and offer assistance.
  - ii. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group (Janski/LaSalle)..... committee report  
Janski reported that at the Feb 10<sup>th</sup> meeting the group continued planning for the Healthy Lake, Healthy Land event. Flyers will be out soon. The group is also working on a “trash tracker” to document how much trash people pick up around the lake and what’s being done to fix it. The MLBO is discussing a “boom net” at the outlet of the lake to collect trash before it heads into the river, but they want to investigate how that could be done without negatively impacting habitat and fish navigability. The group is focusing on things the Rum partnership doesn’t do. Molly did a great job of creating a “cheat sheet” for the group to find out what things are fundable.
  - iii. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership (SOW 2023-MLSWCD-UBMP-3) (Gallice – lead)  
Gallice reported the reason for the amendment was to expand the use of the funds to include a new stormwater project. It also reduced the match commitment from 33% to 25%.
    - a. Amendment to goals and match ..... **(action)**  
**Motion by Hoefert to approve amendment #2 to Statement of Work 2023-MLSWCD-UBMP-3.**  
Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
- 4. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
  - i. Central ML County Targeted Well Sealing FY23 grant agreement (C23-6045)

5. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
  - i. No-till equipment
  - ii. Equipment liaison (Braun)..... liaison report
  - iii. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects
    - a. Bogus Brook feedlot management (SOW PAS5)
    - b. West Branch & Bogus Brook landowner interest survey (SOW PD-1)
    - c. Bogus Brook drainage management (SOW PD-1)
    - d. Soil Health promotion (SOW PD-1) ..... see staff report  
Braun reported he has participated in the farmer-led meetings and felt these were good conversations. He would like to see more people attending to foster good discussion. The invitation is open to any farmers and not based on geographical boundaries. At least one participant has come from Benton County. Upcoming meetings have not been set.
    - e. Soil Health Cost Share Practices (SOW Soil Health)
  - iv. MDA MAWQCP
6. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)
  - i. MN SWCD Forestry Association (LaSalle)..... committee report  
MASWCD Liaison (Janski)  
Janski, Shaw and Clyne met to evaluate the value of MLSWCD membership. There is a strong relationship between forest and clean water, so the MLSWCD is currently building capacity to work with the community to ensure a sustainable forest. However, it is unclear if the work of the SWCD Forestry Assn is significant to this goal. Staff have been able to acquire the information shared at meetings without attending and supervisors probably are not the ones using the information to do forest water quality work.  
Janski shared that some members of the association were discussing potential legislation that proposed reducing the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA) payment rates. If payment rates were reduced by 10% or more, participants would be able to opt out of their 20-year commitments. If this were to become law, it could reduce protection of forested land and impact water quality.  
The result of the MLSWCD committee meeting was to suggest that the association take on a role such as developing a plan to lobby for legislative action that would ensure forestry protection, vs passing resolutions for MASWCD to tackle. That role would be work supervisors could do which would not duplicate what SWCD staff are working on at the district level.  
The forestry association did not raise dues for 2025. Staff need more time to work with other SWCD staff to evaluate the needs and value of association membership. Shaw plans to discuss with Pine and North St. Louis SWCDs. Shaw suggested the board evaluate again mid-year to prepare for decision about 2026 membership.
    - a. Dues request/membership – tabled from Jan..... (discussion/action)  
**Motion by Hoefert to approve paying \$260 SWCD Forestry Association membership dues.**  
Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**  
  
**Motion by Braun to assign Hoefert as a representative to the SWCD Forestry Association.**  
Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
  - ii. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership
    - a. Forestry Stewardship Coordination (SOW EI-4) ..... see staff report
  - iii. LCCMR Tree Planting Grant (ID 2022-260)
    - a. **Motion by LaSalle under contract P23-2942-WSP-09 to authorize payment in the amount of \$300 to William Franey** for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan. Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
    - b. **Motion by Braun under contract P23-2942-WSP-08 to authorize payment in the amount of \$300 to Travis Johnson** for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed

rate of \$300 for an eligible plan. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun.  
Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

iv. Tree planter..... see staff report

**B. Snake River Watershed**

1. Plan Partnership (SRWPP) Board - Hoefert (Braun)/staff ..... board rep/staff report
  - i. Steering Committee report (Shaw) ..... (info)  
Shaw offered leadership development support to watershed coordinator Mary Poelman in working with the newly formed partnership board.
2. Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)
3. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
4. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead) ..... see staff report
5. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)

**C. Miss/St. Cloud Watershed (MRSC)**

1. Partnership Board - being formed - Campbell (Hoefert)/staff..... board rep/staff report  
Shaw reported that the first steps needed to form the partnership board are to first pass a resolution to adopt the comprehensive watershed plan, then assign representatives and sign the partnership joint powers agreement to form an entity.
  - i. **Motion by Hoefert to adopt Resolution 2025-18 to adopt and implement the MRSC Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.** Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
  - ii. **Motion by LaSalle to sign the agreement to join MRSC joint powers entity board.** Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
2. Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)
3. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
4. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
5. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)

**D. Miss/Sartell (MR-Sartell) 1W1P Planning Partnership ..... no planning role**

**E. Other Programs and Grants**

1. Promotional Efforts/Information/Outreach
  - i. Conservation tree sale (Pam Kuhn – lead).....report  
Ms. Kuhn reported that we have sold 4,600 of the 7,000 we ordered. Sale runs until we sell out or until the day of distribution.
  - ii. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee - LaSalle & Campbell (Janski).....report
2. Area 3 Envirothon program overview and support request  
Shaw provided a brief overview of the high school age environmental competition at area, state and national level. MLSWCD has decreased its staff time investment in the competition as it has increased its investment in groundwater, agriculture and forestry capacity. The completion at the Area 3 level is led by northern district partners who have requested volunteers for the event as well as a financial donation. The MLSWCD has historically provided a small financial donation.  
Area 3 will host the state competition in Lake County. Janski plans to attend to observe.
  - i. Dues request \$250 ..... **(action)**  
**Motion by Hoefert to approve support in the amount of \$250.** Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
3. BWSR Easement Stewardship (Siena Storm – lead)
4. BWSR Buffer Law Implementation (Siena Storm – lead) ..... see staff report
  - i. FY25 BWSR Buffer Law grant agreement P25-0615 executed by Shaw ..... (info)
5. DNR Observation Well Monitoring
6. Mille Lacs County Ag Inspector

- i. MDA Noxious Weed grant – not awarded
- 7. Irrigation Practices to Protect GW Quality & Quantity RCPP (Gallice - lead)

**7. District Capacity & Leadership Development**

- A. Personnel
  - 1. Employee handbook policy changes ..... (table to March)
- B. Board
  - 1. SWCD Engineering Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) .....report  
LaSalle reported he attended the organizational meeting. They have posted to rehire engineer tech position which is posted to close the end of February.
  - 2. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Business (Janski-A3 Director) .....report
    - i. Legislative Day at the Capitol – Government Relations Cmte.....(discussion)  
Janski reported that the committee met to determine if participation was of value and plan for reaching out to legislators. Both Janski and Bruan will attend and meet with legislators, some meetings are scheduled in conjunction with Isanti and Sherburn SWCD members. Janski asked the board for input on issues to be discussed. Shaw will provide Janski summaries of outcomes to the four implementation focus areas: drinking water, shoreland, agriculture and forestry.
  - 3. General Supervisor updates - none
- C. Civic Partnership Development (Shaw/Clyne – leads).....report

**8. Fiscal Capacity**

- A. Financial update..... (Financial Specialist)  
Kuhn reviewed the financial reports.
  - 1. **Motion by Hoefert to approve the treasurer’s report and monthly transactions report which include electronic transfer’s # E25-01 through E25-28, credit card fees and checks written #8148-8164, totaling \$69,552.88 and subject to audit.** Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
  - 2. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Treasurer) .....report  
LaSalle reconciled the January statements and reported that all looked good.
  - 3. 2025 Budget amendments (Shaw)  
The district received an unemployment claim and could be liable for up to \$11,725. The district is a reimbursable payer to MN unemployment insurance, so we do not pay unless we get a claim. The administrator challenged the claim to verify eligibility, and the decision was that it is an eligible claim. This expenditure was not budgeted, and our approved budget had only a \$600 buffer. Shaw was unable to complete an impacts assessment prior to the meeting so an updated budget will be brought forward to the March meeting.
  - 4. Peterson Company Audit Engagement Letter  
**Motion by Braun to approve engaging Peterson Co LLC to complete the required audit and financial statements for year end 2024 in the amount of \$5,950.** Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

**9. Approved SWCD Meetings & Events**

**Motion by LaSalle to approve supervisor attendance/reimbursement for the following meetings.** Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

**Internal Operational Committees**

- A. Finance Committee (Hoefert/LaSalle)
  - 1. Statement reconciliation w/Quickbooks (LaSalle)..... monthly
- B. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle)
- C. Conservation/Public Outreach (LaSalle/Campbell)
- D. Equipment liaison (Braun) ..... as needed
- E. Government Relations .....Jan 27

F. One on One Meetings with Administrator ..... as needed

**Partnership Boards**

- G. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) Board (Janski/Braun) ..... Mar 27 @ 4:30
  - 1. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) liaison (Janski).....Feb 10 @ 12:30
- H. Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) Board (Hoefert/Braun) .....Feb 24 @ 9:30
- I. Mississippi-St. Cloud Watershed Policy Committee (Campbell/Hoefert) ..... TBD
- J. TSA Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) ..... Mar 26 @ 10:00


**Voluntary Membership Boards**

- K. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group (Janski/LaSalle)..... next mtg Mar 17 @ 10:00
  - 1. Healthy Land, Healthy Lake event ..... May 3, 2025
- L. MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert) ..... Mar 20 @ 10:00

**State and Regional Association Meetings**

- M. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Meetings
  - 1. MASWCD Legislative Day at the Capital (Braun/Janski) ..... March 4-5, 2025
  - 2. NE Area 3 Resolutions Meeting, Cloquet Forestry Ctr ..... June 6, 2025
  - 3. NE Area 3 Fall Meeting, Kanabec SWCD Hosts ..... Sept 8, 2025

- 10. Evaluate the Meeting – members indicated the meeting was good
- 11. Next Regular Meeting – March 12, 6PM, Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D w/public remote option.  
During Historic Courthouse construction February 3 ~ May 2025 the building will be accessible but disrupted.
- 12. Adjourn – Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 7:37 PM

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tim Braun, Mille Lacs SWCD Board Secretary

3/12/25  
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 Date

Our specific purpose or vision is to organize more sustainable partnership between government and community, by developing and supporting an active role for all citizens in managing soil & water resources, that will ensure soil and water resources can meet the needs and the common good of all citizens.