



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
(JAA) Job Approval Authority
(JPA, E or C) Joint Powers Agreement, Entity or Collaborative)
(RRWP) Rum River Watershed Partnership
(MRSCWE) Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity
(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, June 11, 2025

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

Members Present:

Chair, Jake Janski, District 3
Vice-Chair, Dan Campbell, District 1
Treasurer, Andre LaSalle, District 4
Secretary, Tim Braun, District 2
Member, Robert Hoefert, District 5

Staff Present:

District Administrator, Susan Shaw
Financial Specialist, Pam Kuhn

Participating Guests:

NRCS District Conservationist, Barb Zeroth
Watershed Coordinator, Molly Clyne

Members Absent:

None

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

Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance

1. Conflict of Interest Declaration..... (action)

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 – (additions and deletions of new business or committee reports)..... (action)

Additions: 5.B Organization business – correction to the April 9, 2025, board minutes and under Consent Agenda - pull May 14, 2025, board minutes for corrections.
deletions _____

Motion by LaSalle to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, 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.

Zereth reviewed the Renewing the Countryside events. A panel of guest speakers is planned. Events are planned at the Gorecki Community Center located in Milaca on Tuesday July 29, 2025, from 12:00 – 2:00 pm and at Sapsuckers Farms located in Mora on Thursday, July 31, 2025, from 12:00-2:00 pm. Other events will also be held in other southern and northern areas.

4. Consent Agenda (action)

- A. Approve May 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes – pulled minutes from the consent agenda
- B. Administrators leave request June 25-July 3
- C. Information Only: Partner Reports

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

5. Organizational Business

- A. NRCS/SWCD Memorandum of Understanding: Freedom of Information Act/Civil Rights(action)
- B. The April 9, 2025, minutes included errors in documenting the contract numbers for two contracts approved at that meeting. In the April minutes item 6.A.4.b.ii Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts, BWSR WBIF RRWP (SOW UBMP-3) a contract was approved for a stormwater control project in an amount not to exceed \$23,913.75 based on 75% of the eligible cost of \$31,885 pending landowner and technical signatures. The contract was incorrectly documented in the minutes with contract number WBIFC23-3256-4. It needs to be corrected in the minutes to the correct number WBIFC23-3265-4.

Additionally, item 6.A.6.b.i Groundwater/drinking water safety, BWSR WBIF Rum River (SOW 2023 well sealing & groundwater PD), a contract was approved to seal an abandoned well on tax forfeit property in an amount not to exceed \$1,650.00 based on 60% of the eligible cost of \$2,750.00. The contract was incorrectly documented in the minutes with the contract number WBIFC23-3256-5. It needs to be corrected in the minutes to the correct number WBIFC23-3265-5.

Motion by Hoefert to make two corrections to April 9, 2025, minutes to change what was recorded as contract WBIFC23-3256-4 to the correct number WBIFC23-3265-4, and to correct what was recorded as WBIFC23-3256-5 to the correct number WBIFC23-3265-5. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Braun to approve May 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

6. Strategic Implementation (30 min.)

A. Rum River Watershed

- 1. Partnership (RRWP) Board - Janski (Braun)/staff..... board rep/staff report
No meeting was held.
 - a. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC)liaison/staff report
- 2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (LaSalle/Campbell)..... committee report
- 3. Watershed-wide Community Conversations (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership (SOW EI-4) see staff report
 - b. Soil Health Education grant
- 4. Private lands protection/easement creation (Molly Clyne/Doug Page – leads)..... see staff report

5. Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts (Lynn Gallice – staff lead)
 - a. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group – (Janski/LaSalle)..... committee report
 - b. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects
 - i. Mille Lacs Lake project development (SOW PD-1)
 - ii. BWSR WBIF RRWP (SOW UBMP-3)
6. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – staff lead)
 - a. Central ML Co Targeted Well Sealing FY23 grant (C23-6045)
 - b. **BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects** see project summary
 - i. **Well sealing (SOW 2023 well sealing & groundwater PD)** **(action)**
 1. Cost share contract WBIFC23-3256-6 with Diane Malcom for sealing an abandoned well in an amount not to exceed \$1,686.00 based on 60% of the eligible cost of \$2,810.00.

Motion by LaSalle to approve Contract WBIFC23-3265-6 with Diane Malcom for cost assistance for sealing an abandoned well in an amount not to exceed \$1,686.00 based on 60% of the eligible cost of \$2,810.00. Second by Braun. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. Motion carried.
 - c. **MDH Well water testing grant FY23 - completed** see project summary

Maps were shared depicting results of contaminants found during the well water testing grant. The Board reviewed the map. Shaw noted there was 60% follow-through on having well water tested by those who picked up a free test kit. Shaw noted it was considered very successful. Next MDH grant will target up by Mille Lacs Lake sub watershed region. Question was asked by Janski how and what to report to the people whose results showed high levels of contaminants. Shaw indicated Gallice reached out to the people to provide guidance about how to seek treatment for their drinking water.
 - d. MDH Well water testing grant FY25 application
7. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
 - a. No-till equipment see staff report

A coulter fell off the Tye. Repairs to be done.
 - b. Equipment liaison (Braun) liaison report
 - c. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects
 - i. Bogus Brook feedlot management (SOW PAS5)
 - ii. West Branch & Bogus Brook landowner interest survey (SOW PD-1)
 - iii. Bogus Brook drainage management (SOW PD-1)
 - iv. Soil Health promotion (SOW PD-1)
 - v. **Soil Health Cost Share Practices (SOW Soil Health)** see project overview
 1. **Cover crop contract –** **(info/discussion)**

Tim Braun noted that he signed the Conflict-of-interest disclosure pertaining to item 7.c.v.1. No action was taken as no contract was presented. Shaw provided information pertaining to the cover crop contract. The cover crop contract will be a flat rate, up front \$20,000 payment for approximately 111 acres across multiple fields, with a 3-year term. Discussion was held regarding payments up front along with adding an addendum to apply practices on leased land.

Braun noted seeding date requirements is hard to meet in central MN. He has tried a drone to spread cover crop seeds, and it was a failure. It will need to be drilled in. Discussion held regarding seeding date requirements and flexibility.
 - vi. Structural Ag (SOW Rural BMP)
 - d. MDA MAWQCP
 - e. Soil Health cost share FY23
 - f. Soil Health Staffing grant FY24

- g. Soil Health Delivery FY25
- 8. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert)..... committee report
MASWCD Liaison (Janski)
 - b. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership
 - i. Forestry Stewardship Coordination (SOW EI-4) see staff report
Contracts incorrectly listed under this item on the agenda were moved to item 8.c LCCMR Tree Planting Grant.
 - c. LCCMR Tree Planting Grant (ID 2022-260) see staff report
 - i. Contract P23-2942-WSP-12:

Motion by Braun to approve reimbursement payment to Ryan Beasely at a flat rate of \$300 under contract P23-2942-WSP-12 for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

- ii. Contract P23-2942-WSP-14:

Motion by Braun to approve Contract P23-2942-WSP-14 with Grant Weissner for cost assistance to have a Woodland Stewardship Plan written that would be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$300, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

- d. Tree planter equipment rental programsee draft news release
The board suggested preparing a video of how the planter works and test it to make sure it plants properly.

B. Snake River Watershed

- 1. Partnership Board (SRWPP) - Hoefert (Braun)/staff board rep/staff report
 - a. Steering Committee report (Shaw) report will be provided
Shaw discussed deed restrictions on what is and what is not considered a deed restriction and how partners would use deed restrictions. The Snake River Watershed does have a deed restriction policy in place.
- 2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (LaSalle/Campbell)..... committee report
- 3. Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)
- 4. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
- 5. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead) see staff report
 - a. Outreach/project development (SRWPP WBIF FY24)
Siena is working with a landowner whose property is located in the Snake River Watershed but may use other funding versus WBIF funds.
- 6. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. Outreach/project development (SRWPP WBIF FY24)

C. Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed

- 1. Partnership Board (MRSCWE)- Campbell (Hoefert)/staff board rep/staff report
Campbell provided a brief summary of the meeting. Approved organizational budget, insurance coverage for the entity, deed restrictions discussion. The MRSCWE board decided not to have a deed restriction policy at this time. Approval of a CRP incentive grant program. Meeting to be held tentatively on June 26, 2025, regarding draft statement of work agreements.
 - a. Steering Committee report (Siena Storm – lead) see staff report
- 2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (LaSalle/Campbell)..... committee report
- 3. Stream/shoreland protection

- a. BWSR WBIF MRSC FY25 - Battle Brook (Siena Storm– lead)
- 4. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
- 5. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
 - a. BWSR WBIF MRSC FY25 – Nonstructural soil health management see staff report
- 6. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. BWSR WBIF MRSC FY25
- D. Miss/Sartell (MR-Sartell) 1W1P Planning Partnershipno planning role
 - 1. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)
- E. Other Programs and Grants
 - 1. Promotional Efforts/Information/Outreach
 - a. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee - LaSalle & Campbell (Janski)
 - b. Conservation tree sale (Pam Kuhn – lead)
 - 2. Area 3 Envirothon program
 - 3. BWSR Reinvest in MN (RIM) Easement Stewardship (Siena Storm – lead)
 - 4. BWSR Buffer Law Implementation (Siena Storm – lead) see staff report
 - 5. DNR Observation Well Monitoring (Siena Storm – lead)
 - 6. Mille Lacs County Ag Inspector (Lynn Gallice – lead)
 - 7. Irrigation Practices to Protect GW Quality & Quantity RCPP (Gallice – lead)
 - 8. Wetlands Conservation Act (Shaw/Storm – leads) see staff report
 - a. TEP and Restoration Orders
 - b. Outreach/Community Conversations (Clyne – lead)
 - 9. Agricultural BMP Loan Program (Gallice – lead)

F. Strategic Planning Exercise..... (45 min)

- 1. **Evaluate the economic, environmental and social impacts of Forestry** (discussion)
 Shaw introduced the exercise to the board as a way to apply or experience using our civic policy and civic standards when thinking about the economic, social and environmental impacts of our implementation goals. Shaw shared a graphic that depicts how social, economic and environmental realities overlap and impact people.



The District is testing this civic policy as an Exploration Pilot under the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative. The Board will need to make a decision by December if the District will continue to follow the civic policy, so the proposal is to lead the board through a number of strategic exercises before November that will help board members experience how the civic policy can be implemented.

The Board was asked a series of questions and responses were recorded:

Given our implementation focus area of forestry, what do we need to do to achieve that priority?

- Responsible forestry, intensive forestry – further clarify
- Active management of trees: Understory, disease, logging/harvesting
- Planting trees
- Carbon sequestration
- Protecting existing forest

How do you think we should do that?

- Awareness/education – website, social media
- Incentives – generating income while keeping forests intact

Where? – private/public/tribal land

Who are the stakeholders to that goal?

- Landowners
 - State entities, DNR
 - School forests
 - Municipalities/townships
- Hunters/recreationists: Managing land for wildlife
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Firewood
- Farmers – silvopasture
- Forest industry
 - Amish
 - Private foresters
 - Restoration companies

What are the social and economic impacts related to that goal?

- Cost of doing responsible forestry – incentives
- Property value – benefit vs detriment
 - Best use of the land based on its properties (soil, area)
- Recreation – both social and economic
 - Hunting
- Social tension - Neighbors
- Family: Inheritance, Quality of Life

Environmental impacts?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Sequester carbon | • Foraging |
| • Filtration | • Water quality |
| • Oxygen | • Erosion control |
| • Habitat & wildlife – pollinators | • Forest fires |
| | • Resiliency – invasives |

What can't the District do that maybe others can?

- Make anyone do anything – we don't own land, business, etc.

What can we do that others can't?

- Education & perspective
- Incentives

LaSalle and others commented they liked the civic strategic planning exercise as it revealed ideas each would not have thought of individually.

7. District Capacity & Leadership Development (10 min.)

A. Personnel

1. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle)..... committee report
2. Employee handbook policy changes (tabled)
3. MASWCD District Manager Leadership Development Cohort Shaw report
Shaw met remotely with the group and the consultant that MASWCD has hired provided a draft curriculum for the manager training. The group will meet one more time to review curriculum with the consultant.

B. SWCD Board

1. SWCD Engineering Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert)..... committee report
2. Government Relations Committee (Janski/Braun)..... committee report
3. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Business (Janski-A3 Director)
 - a. NE Area 3 Summer meeting/Resolutions process..... Janski/Braun report

Braun, Jansky, Clyne, Shaw and Storm attended. Janski indicated a good discussion regarding resolutions and one in particular regarding nano bubbles. Staff breakout discussions were held, Clyne reported enjoying the breakout session where staff were grouped based on the type of work they do. There were a lot of new SWCD and Watershed staff. Janski noted the SIFA Resolution passed with discussion and debate. The fall meeting will be held in Mora, MN on September 8, 2025.

- 4. One on One meetings with the Administratorreport
- 5. General Supervisor updates.....info

C. Civic Partnership Development (Molly Clyne – lead)

8. Fiscal Capacity (10 min.)

A. Financial update (Pam Kuhn - Financial Specialist)report

- 1. Treasurer’s report and monthly transactions report which include electronic transfer’s #E25-107 through E25-137, credit card fees and checks written #8191-8205, totaling \$77,137.89 and subject to audit.(action)

Motion by Hoefert to approve the treasurer’s report and monthly transactions report which include electronic transfer’s #E25-107 through E25-137, credit card fees and checks written #8191-8205, totaling \$77,137.89 and subject to audit. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, Braun. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

- 2. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Treasurer)report
LaSalle reported everything went great. No questions or concerns.
- 3. Peterson Company Audit - correspondence (info)

9. Approved SWCD Meetings & Events (action)

Motion by Braun to approve supervisor attendance/reimbursement for the following meetings. Second by Lasalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell, 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**) - mid-year employee reviews.....TBD
July 9, 2025, is set tentatively for staff to meet with the personnel committee.
- C. Conservation/Public Outreach (Braun/Campbell)
 - 1. Opportunity - EAB workshop, Prairie Restorations, 9am -1pm.....June 14
Campbell to attend
 - 2. Opportunity - forestry open house, Sunken Ship Brewery 6-8pmJuly 10
Braun to attend
- D. Equipment liaison (**Braun**)..... as needed
- E. Government Relations..... as needed
- F. One on One Meetings with Administrator please schedule monthly as needed

Partnership Boards

- G. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) Board (**Janski/Braun**)..... June 26 @ 4:30
 - 1. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) liaison (Janski)..... Jun 9 @ 12:30
- H. Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) Board (**Hoefert/Braun**) Jun 23 @ 9:30
- I. Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity (**Campbell/Hoefert**)..... Jun 26 @ 11:00
- J. TSA Area 3 (**LaSalle/Hoefert**)..... Jun 25 @ 10:00

Voluntary Membership Boards

- K. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group (Janski/LaSalle)July 21 @ 10:00
- L. MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert).....July 17 @ 10:00

State and Regional Association Meetings

M. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Meetings

- 1. NE Area 3 Fall Meeting, Kanabec SWCD Hosts Sept 8, 2025

10. Evaluate the Meeting

No comments given

11. Next Regular Meeting – July 9, 2025, at 6PM, Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D w/public remote option.

During Historic Courthouse construction February 3 ~ June 2025 the building will be accessible but disrupted.

Ms. Kuhn requested supervisors turn in their 2nd Qtr expense reports by June 24th.

12. Adjourn - Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.



Tim Braun, Mille Lacs SWCD Board Secretary

7-9-25

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.