



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.

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse
635 2nd Street
Milaca, MN 56353

PH: 320-983-2160
www.millelacsswcd.org

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Conference Room D
Public Remote Access Available

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

Susan Shaw - District Administrator
Pam Kuhn - Financial Specialist

Others Present

Commissioner Liaison, Jay Munson

Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Janski called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

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.

Supervisors were requested to identify any potential 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/Corrections/Deletions)

Motion by Hoefert, second by LaSalle to approve the agenda as presented. 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. - None

4. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve June 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Supervisor 2nd quarter compensation report
- C. Information Only: Partner Reports

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

5. Organizational Business

A. Job Approval Authority – Information only

Establishing conservation practices on private lands in Minnesota is critical to achieving local, state and federal goals for clean and sustainable water resources, healthy and sustainable soil resources, and abundant fish and wildlife. Conservation Technical Assistance requires statewide, base technical assistance capabilities, as well as capabilities tailored to local resource concerns and conservation practices in the diverse landscapes of Minnesota. In Minnesota, local field offices work directly with private landowners to deliver the technical components of conservation planning and implementation services. The Conservation Partnership of Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), and Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) use the NRCS Job Approval Authority (JAA) credentialing system for planning, design and installation of standard conservation practices. This system ensures that local staff who provide technical services in Minnesota are qualified to plan, design, and implement conservation practices.

1. Job Approval Authority Process (See fact sheet)

If MLSWCD does not have staff with JAA to sign off on project contracts we can work with Technical Service Area (TSA) engineers or create agreements with other SWCDs.

Shaw provided an update and stated an open-ended agreement will be drafted and will work with neighboring districts for verbiage, etc., and will bring back to the August meeting for signature.

6. Strategic Implementation

A. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP)

- 1. Partnership (RRWP) Board - Janski (Braun)/staff..... board rep/staff report
Janski indicated the partnership will be requesting a one-year extension for the FY23 WBIF Grant from BWSR. The board also delegated authority to the IPC to approve requests and changes to scopes of work during the last 6 months of a grant.
 - a. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC)liaison/staff report
- 2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (Campbell) committee report (table to August)
- 3. Watershed-wide Community Conversations (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership (SOW EI-4) see staff report
 - b. NWTF superfund grant completed/closed?
 - c. Soil Health Education grant
- 4. Private lands protection/easement creation (Molly Clyne/Doug Page – leads)

5. Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts (Lynn Gallice – lead)

- a. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group – (Janski/LaSalle)
- b. **BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects**
 - i. Mille Lacs Lake project development (SOW PD-1)
 - ii. **BWSR WBIF RRWP (SOW UBMP-3)**

- 1. **Amendment to the Jane Gonzales cost-share contract to change the contract number:**
The Gonzales contract was made March 12, 2025, and given the number WBIFC23-3256-3. However, that contract number was duplicate of a previous contract number and needs to be corrected. The contract number for this contract will be changed from WBIFC23-3265-3 to **WBIFC23-3265-7**. The original contract shall remain in full force and effect, except for those changes made necessary by this amendment.

Motion by Braun, second by LaSalle to amend the Jane Gonzales cost share contract number from WBIFC23-3256-3 to WBIFC23-3265-7. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

1. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)

- a. No-till equipment see staff report
- b. Equipment liaison (Braun) liaison report
Braun indicated parts have been ordered for the Tye. Will follow up with Storm for delivery of Tye for repair.
- c. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects see staff report

- 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 staff report
- vi. **Structural Ag (SOW Rural BMPs)**

- 1. Execute statement of work (SOW) 2023-MLSWCD-RuralBMPs to install a gully stabilization in the West Branch Rum River sub-watershed. The agreement will provide project funds in the amount of \$60,000 and will require a match of \$15,000 planned to be provided by the landowner. Contract with the landowner is anticipated in August.

Shaw noted that a deed restriction is required to be done for this project.

Motion by Braun, second by Hoefert to execute statement of work (SOW) 2023-MLSWCD-RuralBMPs to install a gully stabilization in the West Branch Rum River sub-watershed. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

- d. MDA MAWQCP see staff report
- e. Soil Health cost share FY23 see staff report
- f. Soil Health Staffing grant FY24
- g. Soil Health Delivery FY25

2. **Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)**

- a. MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert)
MASWCD Liaison (Janski)
- b. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership
 - i. Forestry Stewardship Coordination (SOW EI-4) see staff report

c. **LCCMR Tree Planting Grant (ID 2022-260)**

- i. **Contract P23-2942-WSP-14: authorize reimbursement payment to Grant Wiessner** at a flat rate of \$300 for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan.

Motion by LaSalle, second by Hoefert to approve reimbursement payment to Grant Wiessner at a flat rate of \$300 under contract P23-2942-WSP-14 for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

- d. Tree planter equipment rental program see staff report

3. **Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)**

a. **Rum River Stabilization grant partnership with Anoka Conservation District**

Shaw provided background information to the Board regarding City of Princeton’s unstable Rum Riverbank. No action to take. Informational purposes only.

Riebe Park Rum Riverbank stabilization is in the final stage of review by the engineer. Bids and contract award should happen in July. DNR permits are in progress. The project design will mimic the Crane Meadows Platte River project. Includes root wads, bank full bench, two levels of rock (low that is robust and high that is thinner and vegetated), live staking, native veg, and cedar tree revetments. The city is supportive and presenting the project agreement to the city council in July. The city contribution will be \$25,000.

B. **Snake River Watershed**

1. **Partnership Board (SRWPP) – (Hoefert/ Braun)/staff..... board rep/staff report**

a. **Steering Committee report (Shaw) – eligibility discussion**

Hoefert attended and reported:

- Pine County added manure pit pumping to their policy
- New project - manure pit closure – approved by the board

- A property owner from Mille Lacs County attended the meeting requesting funding and asked the board to reconsider his project eligibility. Shaw followed up with the history of the project. Discussion held.
 - WASCOB Plan – Watershed and Sediment Control Basin definition provided.
2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (Braun/Campbell)
 3. Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)
 4. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
 5. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
 - a. Outreach/project development (SRWPP WBIF FY24)
 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
 - a. Steering Committee report (Siena Storm – lead)
2. Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (Braun/Campbell)
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 Partnership** - no planning role

E. **Other Programs and Grants**

1. Promotional Efforts/Information/Outreach
 - a. **Conservation/Public Outreach Committee – (Braun/Campbell)**.....report
Campbell attended the June 14 buckthorn workshop but was not present to provide an update. Table until the August Board Meeting.
Braun plans to attend the July 10 Forestry open house at the Sunken Ship Brewery in Princeton.
 - b. Conservation tree sale (Pam Kuhn – lead)
 - c. **Public awards/recognition efforts** (info/discussion)
MASWCD awards – Shaw noted Clyne has several ideas and suggestions for these awards and will be brought to the August meeting.
2. Area 3 Envirothon program
3. BWSR Reinvest in MN (RIM) Easement Stewardship (Siena Storm – lead) see staff report
4. BWSR Buffer Law Implementation (Siena Storm – lead) see staff report
5. **DNR Observation Well Monitoring (Siena Storm – lead)**..... see staff report
 - a. **Authorization for Administrator to execute contracts annually (policy)** (action)
The contract is received annually with a short turnaround time. The administrator is requesting authorization to execute contracts annually.
Motion by LaSalle, second by Braun to authorize the District Administrator to execute contracts annually. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**
6. Mille Lacs County Ag Inspector (Gallice/Storm) see staff report
7. Irrigation Practices to Protect GW Quality & Quantity RCPP (Gallice – lead)

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

A. Personnel

1. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle)..... committee report
LaSalle provided an update on all staff meetings and Shaw’s review. Gallice will be retiring and her last day with the district will be April 30, 2025. Discussion held regarding Shoreline position.

- 2. Employee handbook policy changesupdate
Shaw held a discussion regarding the district’s Employee Handbook. Shaw would like to apply for a small administrative grant through BWSR to update our employee handbook. Shaw will move forward and apply for a grant to update the employee handbook policy changes.
- 3. MASWCD District Manager Leadership Development Cohort

B. SWCD Board

- 1. SWCD Engineering Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) committee report
LaSalle attended and reported the meeting included financial, salary increases, budget, staff and project updates.
- 2. Government Relations Committee (Janski/Braun)
- 3. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Business (Janski-A3 Director)
 - a. NE Area 3 Fall meeting
 - b. MASWCD Annual Convention
 - c. **Governance 101 – Sept 10 & 11**, St. Cloud, registration \$110 (Aug 22 reg deadline).....info
- 4. One on One meetings with the Administrator
- 5. General Supervisor updates.....info
Hoefert inquired about inviting Mille Lacs County to join the Snake River Partnership Board. Commissioner Munson responded he will inquire with the County board regarding an open invitation to join Rum River Watershed and Snake River Partnership Boards.

C. Civic Partnership Development (Molly Clyne – lead)

8. Fiscal Capacity (15 min.)

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

Kuhn provided an overview of the monthly transaction and treasurer’s report for June 2025.
Motion by LaSalle, seconded by Braun, to approve the treasurer’s report for June 2025 and monthly transaction report which include electronic transfer’s #E25-138 through #E25-166, credit card fees and checks written #8206-8211, totaling \$42,715.39, subject to audit. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Braun. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

- 1. Quarterly Budget to Actualreport
A copy of the 2nd Quarter 2025 Profit & Loss vs. Actual was provided to the Board for review. Kuhn reviewed various items with the Board. Discussion held.

Kuhn also inquired of the Board if they had a preference if the district’s funds were held across multiple banks in order to maintain FDIC coverage or if they would prefer using bank pledges to hold all funds in a single bank. Kuhn provided information regarding pledges, etc. Discussion held. Kuhn will report back at the August meeting as to what will be our best option moving forward.

- 2. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Treasurer)report
LaSalle – Reconciled First National Bank statements only as Neighborhood was not available. Found no issues. Shaw reconciled Neighborhood with no issues.
- 3. 2026 Budget (Shaw) - Presentation to MLC anticipated August 5 or 19th..... (info)
- 4. Finance Committee (LaSalle/Hoefert)

9. Approved SWCD Meetings & Events..... (action)

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

Internal Operational Committees

- A. Finance Committee (Hoefert/LaSalle) MLC budget presentation Aug 19
 - 1. Statement reconciliation w/QuickBooks (LaSalle).....monthly
- B. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle) July 9

- C. Conservation/Public Outreach (Braun/Campbell) July 10
- 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) Sept 25 @ 4:30
 - 1. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) liaison (Janski)..... July 14 @ 12:30 Meeting Cancelled
- H. Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) Board (Hoefert/Braun) tentatively July 28 @ 9:30
- I. Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity (Campbell/Hoefert) tentatively Aug 7 @ 11:00
- J. TSA Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) Sept 24 @ 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. Governance 101 – St. Cloud Sept 10 & 11
 - 2. NE Area 3 Fall Meeting, Kanabec SWCD Hosts Sept 8

- 10. Evaluate the Meeting – Commissioner Munson complemented the board that he felt it was great that the personnel committee takes time to meet with staff.
- 11. Next Regular Meeting – August 13, 6PM, Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D with public remote option.
- 12. Adjourn – Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 7:38 PM



 Tim Braun, Mille Lacs SWCD Board Secretary

8-17-25

 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.