Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse
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Milaca, MN 53535

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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District

Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District was held at the Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D (lower level).

Members Present

Jake Janski, District 3 – Chair
Dan Campbell, District 1 – Vice Chair
Andre LaSalle, District 4 – Treasurer
Tim Braun, District 3 - Secretary

Staff Present

Susan Shaw – District Administrator
Pam Kuhn – Financial Specialist

Members Absent

Robert Hoefert, District 5

Others Present

Jay Munson – MLC Commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Janski called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. 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.

Members were requested to identify any potential conflicts of interest they may have regarding the business of the meeting. The conflict-of-interest declaration form was provided to each for signature.
No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Revision to Item # 5.3.2 - Change checks written from #833-8343 to #8333-8343.
Deletion of item # 5.6.3 NRCS/SWCD MOU: Freedom of Information Act/Civil Rights

Motion by LaSalle to approve the agenda with changes as presented.
Seconded by Campbell.
Approved: Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. 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.

No public comment.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS

Consent Agenda

August 12, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Campbell to approve August 12, 2026 minutes with revisions.
Seconded by LaSalle.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Internal Operational Committees

Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle)

Hiring process update
Shaw provided an update on the Resource Conservationist – Rural Residential/Small Cities position vacancy and noted there was a strong response from candidates. The first round of virtual interviews is scheduled for September 16, with the possibility of the Personnel Committee attending. Second-round interviews will be held in person and is planned to have Personnel Committee participation. The Board has previously given the Personnel Committee authorization to make an offer, but the Board will need to approve the hire at the October 14 Board meeting.

Job Classification/Compensation change
Consider updates to the Resource Conservationist job descriptions and associated reclassification effective 1st full pay period following board action.

Shaw informed the board that the consultant completed the reclassification for the two Resource Conservationist job descriptions, resulting in a higher grade placement on the payscale from J to K and approximate 3% pay increase for those positions. The position opening had been posted as Grade K, with a hiring range between steps 1-4. Due to the reclassification, the change will also affect the current Resource Conservationist position held by Siena Storm. Shaw noted that her position placement would go up a grade and down a step to achieve the 3% pay increase.

Motion by Campbell to authorize the Personnel Committee to make an offer of Grade K, Steps 1-4, and to approve the classification change for Resource Conservationist Siena Storm to Grade K – Step 2, effective the first full pay period following Board action.

Seconded by Braun.

Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Employee handbook update
Shaw provided an update on the employee handbook review. Questions and proposed changes will be discussed with Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A., the firm assisting with the handbook update. Upon completion, the revised handbook will be presented to the Personnel Committee and staff for review. The goal is to have the updated handbook in place by October 14, prior to the new hire's start date.

BWSR Academy Staff Training
Shaw provided the Board with an overview of the classes and staff attending. Janski stated that the Board feels this is valuable training for staff to attend. The Board requested that each staff member provide a report on the training attended.

Conservation/Public Outreach Committee (Braun/Campbell) – No report.
Public awards/recognition efforts (Molly Clyne)

Janski thanked Campbell for having reached out to Jay Carlson when the district recognized him for his conservation contributions and asked if in connecting with Mr. Carlson, had he been able to connect that outreach with the district's civic engagement goal. Campbell shared that Mr. Carlson was interested in being active with the SWCD, so Campbell encouraged him to do so and even to attend board meetings. Janski noted that the district has nominated two additional citizens for MASWCD forest stewardship and wildlife habitat awards and asked for Board thoughts about taking time as Supervisors to engage with those individuals. Discussion followed about how this level of involvement with citizens can contribute to a more robust recognition program. Braun and LaSalle each volunteered to reach out to John Goslinga and Eugene Burma respectively. News releases recognizing the citizen conservation contributions will be published soon. Janski also pointed out that the "news release needs polishing." Shaw affirmed that there would be some re-phrasing needed.

The board agreed that the District should offer to pay mileage and meals for the 2026 MLSWCD Outstanding Conservationist's mileage and a guest to attend the MASWCD Convention awards ceremony. If the nominees for either of the other awards happens to win and be invited to the MASWCD ceremony the district would cover meals and mileage as well.

Government Relations Committee (Janski/Braun) – No report.
One on One meetings with the Administrator – No report
General Supervisor updates - none

Finance Committee (LaSalle/Hoefert)

Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Treasurer)
LaSalle reported he reconciled the August bank statements and reported everything looked good. He thanked Kuhn for making the process easy.

Fiscal Capacity

Kuhn provided an overview of the August transactions report, treasurer's report and Balance Sheet.

Motion by Braun to approve the treasurer's report and monthly transactions report which include electronic transfer's #E26-177 through E26-194, credit card fees and checks written #8333-8343, totaling $51,289.95 and subject to audit.
Seconded by Campbell.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

2027 Budgeting process update
Shaw reported that she addressed the County Board last week regarding the budget and noted there are no significant expenditures anticipated. The MLSWCD budget request

anticipates a 2.5% COL increase following MLC. Shaw also noted that she and Kuhn will work on the individual budget line items.

Joint Powers Entity Partnerships

Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP)

Tour update – Jake noted that House Representative Isaac Shultz and Commissioner Whitcomb will be attending the tour.

Snake River Watershed Planning Partnership (SRWPP)
Partnership Board – Hoefert (Braun)/staff

The Board received a presentation on the sites they would be visiting during the 2026 Board site visits before departing for the tour. Braun noted that he attended a portion of the first part of the meeting through the discussion of the tour. Shaw provided a brief update prepared by Clyne, who attended the meeting as well. The meeting was brief, as the Board was scheduled to participate in a tour. The Board introduced a new Kanabec staff member and reviewed projects that had been approved by the Steering Committee. There was also significant discussion regarding interest earned on partnership funds. Some members noted that the Rum River Watershed Partnership is earning interest on its funds. The Snake River Partnership's funds are held by Pine County, and the process for allocating interest between funding sources would be more complicated. Based on the discussion, it appeared that interest earned on the Snake funds is not currently accessible to the Partnership, but that needs to be confirmed.

Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity (MRSCWE) – no report

SWCD Engineering Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) – no report

Collaborative Partnerships (voting role)

MN Assn of Conservation Districts (MASWCD) (Janski - ex officio)

Janski noted that 10 proposed resolutions will be presented for a vote at the MASWCD Convention. He also noted that Mille Lacs SWCD retirees Lynn Gallice and Bob Hoefert will be recognized at the convention.

Northeast MASWCD Area 3 Business (Janski-A3 Director ex officio)

Janski noted that the Fall Meeting will be held in Two Harbors on September 30 with Janski and Braun attending.

MN SWCD Forestry Association – no report

MN Association of Conservation District Employees– no report

Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI) – no report

Technical, Financial or Advisory Partnerships (non-voting role)

Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group – (Janski/LaSalle) – no report

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – no report

National Assn of Conservation Districts (NACD) – no report

Mille Lacs County (Commissioner Liaison Munson)
Commissioner Munson reported

Munson noted the county is facing a 14.5% medical health insurance increase contributing to a tough budgeting year.

6. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Groundwater/Drinking Water Safety

RRWP Well sealing (SOW 2023 well sealing & groundwater PD)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Authorize cost share contract # WBIFC23-3265-8 with Scott Otto:
The Board discussed whether MLSWCD has a policy requiring landowners to accept the lowest bid. The Board reached a consensus that no such policy exists and that landowners may select higher bids if they choose.

> **Motion** by LaSalle to approve Scott Otto cost share contract #WBIFC23-3265-8 for well sealing in an amount not to exceed $930.00 based on 60% of the eligible cost of $1,550.00. **Seconded** by Braun.
> **Approved:** Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MDH Well water testing grant FY27
Staff report provided in the board packet. Shaw noted we were awarded the MDH Well water testing grant FY27 in the full amount.

Authorization to execute grant agreement
Discussion was held and decided to table authorization until October Board Meeting.

DNR Observation Well Monitoring (Storm – lead)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

County Geologic Atlas
September 15th 9AM presentation/overview at the County Board work session
Campbell and Braun will try to attend the virtual presentation by the Minnesota Geological Survey.

Stormwater
Wetlands Conservation Act (Storm – lead)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Urban Runoff (Shaw – lead)
MLC Public Works south facility stormwater project application (pending details and signatures)
Shaw provided an overview of the proposed water quality project and noted that the County has not yet signed the application for the project. Shaw provided an overview of the steps taken to coordinate between County staff and the SWCD engineer to design an infiltration basin that would adequately treat all runoff from the site. Applicable permits were

researched by contacting the City of Milaca and meeting with the Wetland Conservation Act TEP. The grant provides up to $50,000 in funding, with a required 25% local match. The project will require a 25-year contract and ongoing maintenance. Signatures will be obtained in the following order: County Board, Technical Service Area (TSA) engineer, and SWCD Board. Discussion was held.

Motion by LaSalle to authorize Chair Janski to execute contract #RWBIF25-0171-Stormwater-1 with Mille Lacs County, pending County and technical signatures, to treat stormwater runoff in an amount not to exceed $50,0000, with funding from Rum FY25 WBIF, based on 75% of the actual eligible cost.
Seconded by Braun.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Agriculture/Soil Health

MRSCWE FY25 – Nonstructural soil health management
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Application by Josh Bork, contract #MWBIF-C25-0343-NonStructural-2:

Motion by Braun to approve Josh Bork contract #MWBIF-C25-0343-NonStructural-2 for a 1 year 3 or more species cover crop plan to do annual planting based on a flat rate of $60 per acre/per year, not to exceed $1,050.00.
Seconded by LaSalle.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Invasive Species Management

Invasive Species Management Plan Development (Clyne/Shaw)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Forests (Molly Clyne – lead)

Residential Forest "Let's Grow Together" Tree sale
Staff report provided in the board packet.

RRWP Forestry Stewardship Coordination (SOW EI-4)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

LCCMR Tree Planting Grant (ID 2022-260)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Contract P23-2942-WSP-28: application by Paul Wacker:

Motion by Braun to authorize creation of contract P23-2942-WSP-28 with Paul Wacker 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.
Seconded by Campbell.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Shoreland

BWSR WBIF RRWP (Molly Clyne – lead)

Civic Partnership Development - Natural Shorelines Public Dialogue
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Restoration and Stabilization (Clyne – lead)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

Program Support

Coordination & Outreach Infrastructure
Staff report provided in the board packet.

RIM Easement Management (Storm – lead)
Staff report provided in the board packet.

7. APPROVED SWCD MEETINGS & EVENTS

Motion by Braun to approve supervisor attendance and reimbursement for the following meetings:

Internal Operational Committees

Meeting	Members	Authorized Rep	Meeting date
Finance	Hoefert and LaSalle	NA	
Statement reconciliation	LaSalle	LaSalle	monthly
Personnel	Janski and LaSalle	NA	
1st round Interviews (virtual)		Shaw & HR only	1st round Sept 16
2nd round Interviews (in person)		Janski and Braun	2nd round tbd
Conservation/Public Outreach Geologic Atlas Presentation	Braun and Campbell	Braun and Campbell	Sept 15 at 9AM (remote option)
Equipment Liaison	Braun	NA	
Government Relations	Janski and Braun	NA	
One on one meetings with the Administrator	All Supervisors		as needed

Joint Powers Entity Partnerships (voting role)

Meeting	Members	Authorized Rep	Meeting date
Rum River Watershed Partnership Board & Tour	Janski and Braun	Janski and Braun	Sept 24 at 4:30 PM
Rum Implementation Planning Committee	Janski (liaison)	Janski	Sept 14 at 12:30
Snake River Watershed Partnership Board	Hoefert and Braun	Braun	Sept 28 at 9:30 AM
Mississippi River-St. Cloud Watershed	Campbell and Braun	Save the date	TBD Nov 5 at 11:30 AM

Meeting	Members	Authorized Rep	Meeting date
Technical Service Area 3	LaSalle and Hoefert	Save the date	Dec 23 at 10AM

Collaborative Partnerships (non-voting role)

Meeting	Members	Authorized Rep	Meeting date
NE Area 3 Fall Meeting – Two Harbors	All	Janski and Braun	September 30
MN SWCD Forestry Association	Hoefert	Save the date	Nov 19 at 10AM
Midwest Active Citizenship initiative (MACI)	Janski	Save the date	November 19

Technical, Financial or Advisory Partnerships (non-voting role) Partnerships (non-voting role)

Meeting	Members	Authorized Rep	Meeting date
Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group	Janski or LaSalle	Janski	Sept 14 at 10 AM

Seconded by LaSalle.
Approved: Braun, Campbell, LaSalle, Janski. Opposed: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

8. EVALUATE THE MEETING

Cadence and structure?
Outreach and recognition program.

Did the content of the meeting advance our strategic goals?
No comment.

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING

October 14, 2026, 5PM, Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D w/public remote option.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 6:29 PM.

Submitted by: Pam Kuhn, Financial Specialist and Susan Shaw, Administrator
Reviewed by: Tim Braun, Board Secretary

Approved by the board on: October 14, 2026

Board Secretary signature:

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Date: