

**Minnehaha Conservation District
December 9th, 2024, Monthly Meeting
USDA Service Center
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

Heber called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Supervisors present: Rick Bonander, Travis Entenman, Gordon Heber, Jim Pfeifer, and Allen Severtson

Supervisors absent: None

Advisors present: Brian Top

Advisors absent: Carl Eliason and Kathleen Mackeprang

Others present: John Parker, Denise Fletcher, Alina Krone-Hedman, Dan Wehmeyer, Barry Berg, and Jaelynn Dreckman

Agenda: MSP to approve with the addition of new business item #5 – “Notice of Intent to Continue Operation” by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes.

Minutes of November 12th meeting: MSP to approve by Bonander and Pfeifer. All ayes.

Treasurer’s report: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve by Severtson and Entenman. All ayes.

Bills: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve and pay bills by Pfeifer and Bonander. All ayes.

NRCS activity report by Dan Wehmeyer:

WETLANDS: 28 certified wetland determination requests in process. 10 FSA-569-potential violations.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): Not taking any new offers currently.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTwP): Sign up deadline was November 1st. Received 2 applications. Working on planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): Sign up deadline was November 1st. Received 40 applications. Working on planning.

Conducting interviews to hire a Pathways employee.

Big Sioux River Project Report by Barry Berg:

SRAM & RAM: Working on RBI/SRAM project. Working on digitizing with Jaelynn.

EQIP/RCPP: No update

OTHER RELATED ITEMS: All annual reports done. NPSTF meeting in Pierre on December 12th. Asking for \$1,031,750.00 for the first 3 years of Segment 5 BSRP. Training Jaelynn Dreckman, the new Project Coordinator. Next steering committee meeting in March.

Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman:

OUTREACH: Set up Christmas tree at Good Earth State Park for event on December 7th. Tabled at “Understanding PFAS in South Dakota’s Waterways” event at Augustana University on December 7th.

CITY PARTNERSHIP: Prairie and Pollinator Program – sales halted until spring. **Prairie and Pollinator Demonstration Garden** – MCD was asked to help better establish the demonstration garden at the Environmental Center. **Community Garden and Education Demonstration Area** – planning for spring 2025.

GRANTS/FUNDING PARTNERSHIP: SDACD Locally Led – Attended Turner County Board meeting on November 19th – discussed locally led and conversation about pressing matters specific to their district. Plan to continue attending different district meetings and gathering information. **Friends of NACD Grant** – Did not apply in favor of looking into other funding avenues. **NACD Technical Assistance Grant** – No news on status yet.

OTHER: Soil Health Coalition – continuing to work on Gevik Site improvements. **Sioux Empire Water Festival** – Contact made with schools, presenters and donors. Next meeting is January. **Newsletter** – People were contacted for articles. Continuing work to get out in early January. **Conversations & Conservation** – Took place on December 3rd at 5:30 p.m. at Fernson Downtown with 6 attendees for networking and socializing. Next one planned for early February. **Holiday Meet-up** – Planned for January 16th at 6:00 p.m. at the Tavern Grille on Louise Ave.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes – **Parker** handed out a Tri-State Neighbor article, “Tackling the Green Glacier”, about the cedar invasion fight. **Jen Bleyenbergh** sent in information about the South Dakota Well Drillers Association Scholarship that is available. Scholarship information and application will be placed on the web site for the public to see. **Krone-Hedman** mentioned that she wrote an article that will be featured in the NACD quarterly newsletter. **Berg** mentioned the Soil Health Coalition meeting that will be held in Watertown on January 15th.

Update from Supervisors – **Bonander** presented an article about the new Ag Heritage Museum exhibit “Digging Deep: The Secrets of the Soil” in Brookings.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Service Report (bio-solids, tree planting, grass planting, Gevik Site, Water Festival)**
Bio-solids: 2025 contract will go in on December 12th. \$43,000 work for the year.
Trees: 30 – 35 acres planned. Shelterbelt cleanup letters will go out to past customers.
Grass: 200 – 300 acres. 3 or 4 CRP plantings to do. **Gevik Site:** Kiosk sign should be here this week. Izaak Walton League may put money into a project. Need to talk to the township about fixing the road. **Water Festival:** \$11,750 in donations received so far. \$41,000 in funds available so far.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Eastern SD Soil & Water Research Farm Meeting in Brookings, SD on January 8, 2025**
There is a luncheon at 12:00 p.m. and a focus group meeting at 12:30 p.m. Need to RSVP for the luncheon. Parker, Heber and Langner plan to attend. Usually 30-40 people attend.
- 2. Budget Review - 2025**
Parker presented the budget. Krone-Hedman mentioned the possibility of joining other local chamber of commerce groups in addition to the Sioux Falls Area Chamber. MSP to continue the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce membership, and add Brandon, Dell Rapids and Hartford chamber memberships by Pfeifer and Bonander. All ayes. MSP to approve the 2025 budget by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes.

3. Youth Pheasant Hunt in 2025 in Conjunction with the Izaak Walton League

Parker presented information about this educational event that he has been looking into arranging. The Izaak Walton League would provide shells, dogs, participants, etc. The Conservation District would provide land for the event at the Gevik Site. This would occur about 2 weeks before the season opener in October 2025. The board wanted more information on what the cost of liability insurance would be and the cost of birds to release. Tabled until the next meeting in January 2025.

4. Employee Yearly Evaluations

(See below after Executive Session)

5. Intent to Continue Operation

Notice was presented to the board for their acknowledgement.

Executive Session (if needed) – MSP to go into executive session at 4:45 p.m. to discuss item #4 by Pfeifer and Bonander. All ayes. President Heber declared the board out of executive session at 4:57 p.m. MSP to increase salaries for John Parker, Mike Langner, Gene Jaeger, Denise Fletcher and Alina Krone-Hedman by 4.5% per year, effective with the first payroll in January 2025 by Bonander and Pfeifer. All ayes.

CONSERVATION PLAN SIGNING - None

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSP to adjourn at 5:00 p.m. by Severtson and Entenman. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: January 13th, 2025, at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center
Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary