



North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792

Regular Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2024

The meeting was held in person at the District office. A virtual link was available.

Supervisors Present at Roll Call: Chuck Bainter, Peggy Pearson, Mark Peterson, and Gary Rantala were present in-person. Frank Modich was excused.

Staff Present: Anita Provinzino, District Administrator; Miranda Frenning, Accounting & Human Resources Specialist; John McCormick, Regional Farm Bill Forester; Erin McMichael, Conservation Corp Member; Tristan Nelson, District Forester; Kayla Owens, Day Camp Leader; and Jon Utecht, AIS Program Coordinator were present in-person. Kaela Natwora, Watershed Conservationist, and Phil Norvitch, Resource Conservationist; and Becca Reiss, Community Conservationist joined virtually.

Others Present: Allison Praet, Natural Resources Conservation Service

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Chair, Peggy Pearson.

1. Agenda - Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve the agenda with the addition of Items 7b. Woodland Stewardship Plan Cost Share Contract & 11g. Credit Card for Kayla Owens. Motion carried.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting – Moved by Gary Rantala/Mark Peterson to approve the minutes. Motion carried.
3. Financial Reports & Program Summary – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to accept the financial reports and program summary. Motion carried.
4. Accounts Receivable and Payable – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve accounts payable and accounts receivable as updated 6/12/24. Motion carried.
5. Guest Introductions and Comments – Erin McMichael, Conservation Corps Member and Kayla Owens, Day Camp Leader were introduced and were welcomed to the District. Each provided a brief background of their education and experience.

NEW BUSINESS

6. Aquatic Invasive Species – Contracts for Inspections on Private Accesses – Moved by Mark Peterson/Gary Rantala to approve contracts with Lake Vermilion resorts: Fortune Bay Marina, Forest Lane, Glenmore, Gruben's, Head O' Lakes, Lake Vermilion Houseboats, Life O' Riley, Retreat Lodge, Spring Bay, Whispering Winds, White Eagle, and Your Boat Club – Vermilion; plus Pelican Lake resorts: Birch Forest, Cabin O' Pines and Richardson's Shangri La at \$9 per uploaded watercraft inspection.
7. BWSR
 - a. Pollinator Pathways Grant Application & Board Resolution 2024-09 – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve Board Resolution 2024-09. Motion carried.
 - b. Woodland Stewardship Plan Cost Share Contract with Landowner (St. Louis River) - Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve a cost share contract with Frank Modich for a up to 100% of the cost of a woodland stewardship plan in the St. Louis River watershed. Motion carried.

8. DNR CPL Snow Shelter Brush Sawing Contract Award – Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve a brush sawing contract with Richard J. Miltakis for up to \$6422.50 as per his quote. Motion carried.
9. NRCS Contract Amendment & Board Resolution 2024-10 – Moved by Gary Rantala/Mark Peterson to approve Board Resolution 2024-10. Motion carried.
10. Strategic Plan Action Step Update – Anita outlined the updated action steps that staff met about and agreed to in May.
11. Human Resources
 - a. Conservation Manager job description, wage range, and approval to hire – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve the Conservation Manager job description and hiring an internal candidate for an additional \$10,000. Motion carried.
 - b. Organization Chart Update – Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve both organization charts effective in July and October 2024. Motion carried.
 - c. Community Conservationist job description update and wage range – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve the updated Community Conservationist job description and set the hourly wage range at \$25.50-\$30.00 dependent on qualifications. Motion carried.
 - d. Tristan Nelson wage adjustment as of 6/12/24 – Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve a 4% increase effective 6/12/24. Motion carried.
 - e. Jon Utecht wage adjustment as of 6/30/24 - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve a 4% increase effective 6/30/24. Motion carried.
 - f. Zach Evans wage adjustment as of 7/5/24 - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve a 4% increase effective 7/5/24. Motion carried.
 - g. Credit Card for Kayla Owens – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve a \$500 credit card for Kayla Owens. Motion carried.
12. Upcoming Supervisor Meetings and/or Trainings
 - a. St. Louis River Policy Committee – July 3 – The correct date is June 27.
 - b. TSA 3 – June 26
 - c. Other – Anita informed the board that the Area 3 Annual Meeting will be held on September 9 & 10 in Grand Marais. Hotel reservations are due by July 8 or 30 depending on the hotel.

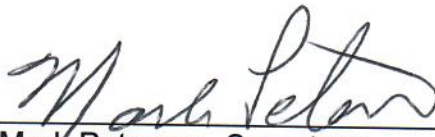
REPORTS – See packet for reports on file

12. District Administrator Report – Anita
13. Accounting & Human Resources Specialist – Miranda
14. Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator Report – Jon U.
15. Community Conservationist Report- Becca - *last day 6/21/2024* – Becca was thanked for the tremendous job she has done making our SWCD known during the past six years. She will be missed.
16. District Forester Report – Tristan
 - a. Tree Sale Report – Tristan was commended for running his first sale with no errors!
17. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – John M.
18. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – Zach
19. Resource Conservationist Report – Phil
20. St. Louis River Watershed Conservationist Report – Kaela – The commercial featuring Kaela and Tristan promoting Adopt-A-Drain was shown.

21. NRCS District Conservationist Report – Allison indicated that Minnesota is nationally known for the forestry work that is done with SWCDs. In addition USDA NRCS' forestry technical standards lead all agencies in the nation! She has realized how "our work" matters on a larger scale.
22. Supervisor & Committee Reports
- a. Area 3 Resolutions Meeting – June 7 – Chuck and Anita shared their views of the recent Resolutions meeting that focused on forestry. Resolutions focusing on setting forestry cost share rate standards and climate change priorities were both passed. Zach and Anita presented with Garrett Christianson of NRCS on the Arrowhead Forest Partnership.
 - b. Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development – May 20 – Peggy reported that all of their Enbridge funding has been committed, 2 projects are complete and 1 is in being replanted due to the drought. The annual meeting will be August 1st.
 - c. Local Work Group – May 8 – Chuck reported the top priorities were terrestrial habitat, fire management and degraded plant conditions.
 - d. SWCD Forestry Association – May 16 – Mark and Anita reported on the May meeting. The Northshore Forest Collaborative presentation was emailed previously.
 - e. Other – None

CLOSING

24. Next Meeting Date – The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.
25. Adjourn – Moved by Gary Rantala/Mark Peterson to adjourn the meeting at 12:39 p.m.
Motion carried.



Mark Peterson, Secretary
July 10, 2024



Resolution 2024-09

**North St. Louis
Soil and Water Conservation District**

505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000
www.nslswcd.org

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources announced the Pollinator Pathways grant program to establish and strengthen collaborations in residential and educational spaces to create connections to statewide and local habitat corridors/pathways, especially in underserved communities, and

WHEREAS, the District staff plan to develop and submit a proposal that would meet those requirements; and

WHEREAS, this would create pathways for pollinators in the Virginia neighborhood from Olcott Park to Silver and Bailey's lake by providing educational workshops, community and residential plantings and creating a walking tour highlighting pollinators and their habitat; and

WHEREAS, this funding relates to the mission of the District; and

WHEREAS, North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to accept this funding, if awarded.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the staff to apply for and the District Administrator or Board Chair to secure and sign all documents related to any such award.

Motion Made by: *Bainter*

Seconded by: *Rantala*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*

Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 12th day of June, 2024 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.



Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



**North St. Louis
Soil and Water Conservation District**
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) accepted, in September 2022, a 2022 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Collaboration Grant for the Arrowhead Forest Partnership (Board Resolution 2022-11) in the amount of \$400,000, and amended to \$669,500 in September 2023 (Board Resolution 2023-13), and

WHEREAS, the Carlton, Cook, Lake, and North St. Louis SWCD's make up the Arrowhead Forest Partnership and provide forestry services to landowners applying for USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); and

WHEREAS, the grant agreement currently funds two regional farm bill forester positions, deliverables of the SWCD foresters, and expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 allocated significant increases of EQIP funding over the next four years, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) estimates that will double to triple the funding available to Minnesota landowners; and

WHEREAS, NRCS and North St. Louis SWCD see the need to improve efficiencies and propose adding two technician positions and creating a supervisory regional farm bill forester position to train and supervise three staff; and

WHEREAS, NRCS is willing to allocate additional funds to pay for these efficiencies as it will allow more EQIP funding to reach the landowner and conservation practices to be installed; and

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to add these positions and accept additional funding to provide services related to its mission.

NOW THERE BE IT RESOLVED, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors accepts said funding and hereby authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents related to said funding.

Moved by: *Rantala*
Seconded by: *Peterson*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*

Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 12th day of June 2024; and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary