



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

Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 12, 2025

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

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

**Staff Present:** Anita Provinzino, District Administrator; Jake Bendel, Watershed Conservationist; and Miranda Frenning, Accounting & Human Resources Specialist were present in-person. Corey Denning, Resource Conservationist; Joe Murphy, Community Conservationist; John McCormick, Regional Farm Bill Forester; Jon Utecht, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator; Kaela Viehman, Watershed Conservationist; and Tristan Nelson, Forester; were present online.

**Others Present:** Blake Bartz, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Dylan McCauley, Natural Resources Conservation Service were present in person. Melanie Bomier, Board of Water & Soil Resources; and Allison Praet, Natural Resources Conservation Service; were present online.

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Chair, Peggy Pearson.

1. Agenda - Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Mark Peterson to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Financial Reports & Program Summary – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to accept the financial reports and program summary. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Accounts Receivable and Payable – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Mark Peterson to approve the accounts payable and accounts receivable as updated 02/12/25. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Guest Introductions and Comments –
  - a. Welcome & Introduction of Jake Bendel, Watershed Conservationist for the Rainy Headwaters/ Vermilion Watersheds – Jake Bendel was welcomed to the District. He gave a brief overview of his background.
  - b. Blake Bartz and Dylan McCauley were introduced. Blake is a new District Conservationist and Dylan a new forester working in the Virginia NRCS office.
  - c. Melanie Bomier thanked the staff for getting all eLINK reports in on time.

NEW BUSINESS:

6. AIS Season Start Up Purchases – Up to \$13,500 – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to authorize up to \$13,500 in start-up purchases for the upcoming AIS season. Motion carried unanimously.
7. Auditor Selection for Audit of 2024 – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to engage Peterson Company Ltd to conduct the 2024 audit. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Billable Rate Effective 12/22/24-12/20/25 – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Mark Peterson to approve the billable rate for all grants/contracts that don't have other rates specified, effective 12-22-24 through 12/20/25. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Board Packet/Meeting Update Ideas – Discussion was held about updating the board packet and/or meeting format. Several ideas were discussed including shorter reports, verbal reports that don't repeat information contained in the written reports or already discussed by others, board is to ask staff questions before the meeting, tying work into objectives and a data-driven dashboard. Anita will meet with staff and begin implementing some/all of these ideas.
10. BWSR
  - a. Cloquet River Well Sealing Contract with Landowner (Conservation Contracts) – Moved by

*The mission of the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District is to encourage sustainable use of our natural resources by engaging people in soil and water conservation in northern St. Louis County.*



- Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve a cost share contract with Susan Dettwieler in the amount of \$350 to seal an unused well on her property in the Cloquet River Watershed using Conservation Contracts funding. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. Rainy River/Rainy Lake Watershed Plan – Adopt & Implement - Board Resolution 2025-04 – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Mark Peterson to approve Board Resolution 2025-04 adopting and implementing the Rainy River/Rainy Lake Watershed Plan pending its approval by BWSR. Motion carried unanimously.
  - c. Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Watershed Plan - Adopt & Implement - Board Resolution 2025-05 - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve Board Resolution 2025-05 adopting and implementing the Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Watershed Plan. Motion carried unanimously.
11. MPCA
- a. GreenCorps Host Site Application Board Resolution 2025-06 – Moved by Mark Peterson/Jerry Hovi to approve Board Resolution 2025-06 authorizing staff to apply to be a host site for a GreenCorps member from September 25-August 26. Motion carried unanimously.
  - b. Rainy Headwaters Surface Water Assessment Grant Board Resolution 2025-07 – Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve Board Resolution 2025-07 authorizing staff to execute an agreement with MPCA for surface water assessment in the Rainy River-Headwaters. Motion carried unanimously.
12. Upcoming Supervisor Meetings and/or Trainings
- a. Potential to Solicit Donations for Envirothon – Chuck volunteered to solicit donations supporting the local Envirothon. Joe will provide a letter for his use that outlines the program.
  - b. Legislative Day at the Capitol – March 4 & 5 – Mark and Phil will attend,
  - c. Other
13. Other
- a. Motion by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to sign on to the letter written by Wildlife Forever opposing the 50% reduction in aquatic invasive species prevention funds as outlined in the Governor's budget. Motion carried unanimously.
  - b. Motion by Mark Peterson/Jerry Hovi to have the board sign on to a separate letter opposing the same. Motion carried unanimously.
  - c. Motion by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to approve payments to Koochiching County Environmental Services for \$5,501.03 and WA Fisher for \$150.00 that were not listed on the accounts payable report. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS: See packet for reports on file

- 14. District Administrator Report – Anita Provinzino – Also Anita reported that St. Louis County is not passing along \$9,000 from the natural resources block grant; the aquatic invasive species prevention funding is being recommended for a reduction of about \$100,000 due to the County having less funds available, and we await the signed amendment from NRCS. The Pay Equity Compliance Certificate for 2025-2027 was received and is posted.
- 15. Conservation Manager Report – Phil Norvitch
- 16. Accounting & Human Resources Specialist – Miranda Frenning
- 17. Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator Report – Jon Utecht
- 18. Community Conservationist Report- Joe Murphy
- 19. District Forester Report – Tristan Nelson
- 20. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – John McCormick
- 21. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – Zach Evans
- 22. Resource Conservationist Report – Corey Denning
- 23. Rainy Headwaters/Vermilion Watershed Conservationist Report – Jake Bendel
- 24. St. Louis River Watershed Conservationist Report – Kaela Veihman
- 25. Natural Resources Conservation Service Report – Allison Praet indicated that in the new federal climate NRCS staff are getting information at the same time which is different than what has happened in the past when it was distributed through a chain of command. Some of the features



in their software have been disabled which limits their abilities. She will pass along information as she has it.

26. Supervisor & Committee Reports –

- a. Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development – January 27 - Neither Peggy nor Chuck were able to attend.
- b. Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development Winter Meeting – February 6 - Neither Peggy nor Chuck were able to attend.
- c. Personnel Committee Report – Chuck stated that he and Frank conducted Anita's performance evaluation. He stated that she her work is excellent.
- d. Policy Committee Rainy/Vermilion – February 7 - Chuck reported that the committee elected the same officers, got an update on the budget and workplan, set quarterly meeting dates and heard a presentation from Melanie on roles & responsibilities.
- e. SWCD Forestry Association – January 16 - Mark indicated a presentation by the Aitkin County Land Department highlighted changes to how counties sell land that has been tax forfeited.
- f. Technical Service Area III – January 22 - Chuck stated the TSA elected the same slate of officers except that Tom Fasteland, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor, was elected vice-chair, replacing Gary Rantala who retired. The next meeting is March 26.

CLOSING:

27. Confirmed Next Meeting Date - The meeting was set for March 12, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.

28. Adjourn – Moved by Mark Peterson/Chuck Bainter to adjourn the meeting at 12:13 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.



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Mark Peterson, Secretary  
March 12, 2025



**Resolution 2025-04**  
**North St. Louis**  
**Soil and Water Conservation District**  
505 3<sup>rd</sup> St N, Ste A  
Virginia MN 55792  
(218) 288-6144

**Whereas**, the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Watershed Planning Partnership sent the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for approval according to Minnesota Statutes 103B. 101, Subdivision 14;

**Whereas** the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District staff participated in the development of the Rainy River - Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) in an advisory capacity; and

**Whereas** the District must adopt the Plan to replace the county local water management plan as per Minnesota Statutes 103B.

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved**, contingent on plan approval by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Board, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the Plan for the area of the Rainy River - Rainy Lake watershed within its jurisdiction.

Motion Made by: *Hovi*  
Seconded by: *Peterson*  
Affirmative: *Bainier, Hovi, Pearson, Peterson*  
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 12<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025; and that I am duly authorized to execute this certification.*

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary





**Resolution 2025-05**  
**North St. Louis**  
**Soil and Water Conservation District**  
505 3<sup>rd</sup> St N, Ste A  
Virginia MN 55792  
(218) 288-6144

**Whereas**, on January 21, 2025, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources approved the Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) according to Minnesota Statutes 103B. 101, Subdivision 14; and

**Whereas** the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District staff participated on the advisory committee for the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan for the watershed; and

**Whereas** the District must adopt the Plan to replace the county local water management plan as per Minnesota Statutes 103B.

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved**, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District hereby adopts the Plan for the area of the Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids watershed within its District.

Motion Made by: *Bainter*

Seconded by: *Peterson*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Hovi, Pearson, Peterson*

Opposed: *none*

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Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



**North St. Louis  
Soil and Water Conservation District**  
505 3<sup>rd</sup> St N, Ste A  
Virginia MN 55792  
(218) 749-2000  
[www.nslswcd.org](http://www.nslswcd.org)

## **Resolution to Approve Application for Minnesota GreenCorps Member**

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota GreenCorps is requesting applications to become a host site for a full-time member, working 1700 hours from September 2025-August 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan identified the goal of "Identify the people and systems needed to manage new projects" and one of the action steps is to expand the intern program; and

**WHEREAS**, a Minnesota GreenCorps member, although not an intern, would convey the intent of the action step to provide work experience and training; and

**WHEREAS**, a Minnesota GreenCorps member would facilitate this goal. If awarded, their focus will be on Adopt-A-Drain, Smart Salting, rain garden outreach and development;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports an application for a Minnesota GreenCorps, would enter into an agreement with the MPCA if selected, and authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents related to such.

Motion Made by: Peterson  
Seconded by: Hovi  
Affirmative: Bainter, Hovi, Pearson, Peterson  
Opposed: none

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Peterson, Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





**North St. Louis  
Soil and Water Conservation District**  
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(218) 749-2000  
[www.nslswcd.org](http://www.nslswcd.org)

**Resolution to Approve a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG)  
for the Rainy River-Headwaters Watershed**

**WHEREAS**, the Rainy River-Headwaters Watershed partially lies within the North St. Louis SWCD; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is requested assistance to monitor and collect data for two years across the watershed as part of its intensive watershed monitoring process to determine the health of lakes and streams, and

**WHEREAS**, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District could assist the MPCA with lake and stream monitoring by collecting surface water quality data, and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District are negotiating a workplan and budget for service in the Rainy River-Headwaters Watershed, and

**WHEREAS**, the North St. Louis SWCDs total reimbursement for services provided is expected to be approximately \$40,000, and

**WHEREAS**, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to approve this working agreement to provide these services related to its mission.

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

Motion Made by: Peterson  
Seconded by: Bainter  
Affirmative: Bainter, Hovi, Pearson, Peterson  
Opposed: none

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Peterson, Board Secretary

2/12/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date