

**Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**Thursday, March 18, 2021
Beltrami County Board Room
701 Minnesota Ave. NW
Bemidji, MN 56601**

**OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SERVICES
IN BELTRAMI COUNTY**

Members Present: Ray Hendrickson – Vice Chair
Ruth Trask – Treasurer
Rachel Gray – Secretary
Sam Christenson – Public Relations

Members Absent: Shane Bowe - Chair

Others Present: Brent Rud – District Manager
Zach Gutknecht – ESD/SWCD
Aly Bergstrom – ESD/SWCD
Megan FitzGerald – ESD/SWCD
Corey Campbell – ESD/SWCD
Kody Karr – NRCS
Tom Barry – Beltrami County Administrator

Vice Chair Ray Hendrickson called the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting for March 18, 2021 officially to order at 9:30 a.m.

Additions to agenda: Item 5.c.iii. Grace Lake Water Quality Sampling and 5.c.iv. Watermark Art Center Signage. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the amended agenda. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

Secretary’s Report:

Motion by Rachel Gray to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2021 SWCD meeting. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.

Treasurer’s Report:

Ruth Trask reviewed the IFS statement for February 2021. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

NEW BUSINESS

Reports:

NRCS – Jody Peek

- **CSP Update** – Classic/General Sign-up Deadline is March 26th. Currently Beltrami County has 81 applications. The Bemidji Team has around 160 applications.

- Funding is going to be limited in 2021 so a workload prioritization worksheet will be completed on all applications to determine a high, medium, or low priority. Prioritization worksheet will look at dates the applications were taken. Any applications taken prior to 02/06/2020 will be a high priority.
- Reason for high numbers: a waiver signed by the chief is allowing any participant who has a 2021 renewal that did not get in try again in 2021 for a classic application.
- Renewals Sign-up – Letters were mailed to participants who have expiring 2017 contracts (these expire on 12/31/2021) informing them they could sign up for a renewal application by 03/31/2021.
 - New policy allows participants to continue to renew as many times as they would like. Previous policy only allowed one time for a renewal. Funding is still a limiting factor so still no guarantee of getting a 2nd renewal. Beltrami County has 30 contracts set to expire in December so 30 renewal letters were mailed out. The field office has received 22 signed applications back.
- **EQIP Update**
 - Conservation Assessment and Ranking (CART) is due on all applications on March 26th, 2021. A total of 18 applications are being assessed and ranked. Applications are a combination of high tunnels, forestry management plans, pollinator plantings, tree plantings, a grazing system for a yak farm, a grazing system for Red Lake Buffalo Farm, and a food composter for Red Lake.
- **CRP Update**
 - General sign-up is open. Some interest in CP-23 wetland restorations and CP-42 pollinators.
- **New Staff**
 - Strait Idso was hired as a 2nd Soil Conservationist in the Bemidji Field Office. His first day working was March 1st, 2021. William Lee was hired as a Soil Conservationist in the Baudette Field Office. His first day working in the Baudette Field Office was March 15th, 2021.
- **Other**
 - LWG Meetings: Staff are attending weekly trainings. Local workgroup meetings need to be scheduled by July 30th, 2021. Might need a local committee meeting scheduled with SWCD to come up with a list of attendees to invite.

District Manager – Brent Rud

- MASWCD Legislative Briefing Day – MASWCD’s Online Legislative Briefing Day at the Capital is 3/18/2021. The main topic is expected to be funding avenues.
- COVID-19 Update – Staff are expected to be back in the office by construction season.
- Area VIII Meeting – Brent and Ruth Trask gave a summary of the meeting. Beltrami is expected to host the AREA VIII meeting in 2024 on their 75th anniversary.

Staff

- Staff provided updates on recent activities. Activities include reorganizing the HWC grant work plan, buffer prioritization, and a PMA 25 update.
- Tree Program – Approximately 17,000 of 22,000 trees sold. Discussion of including donation option for Beltrami Fairgrounds planting on next year's order form.
- Technical Training – Area VIII trainings planned: Ecological Classification System/Native Plant Community; tree and shrub site prep and establishment; shoreline restoration on Lake Marquette; and GIS training.
- Virtual Classrooms – Zach has been working with Red Lake DNR and Headwaters Science Center to create virtual classes to temporarily replace the Water Festival. This project will spend down the remainder of the MPCA education grant.
- Grace Lake Water Sampling – Grace Lake requires additional monitoring of the inlet. Cost estimates of the ongoing sampling regimen from RMB Labs are: \$135 for wetland soil testing and \$1,368 for surface water testing. Costs are covered by County – costs to SWCD are staff time.
- Watermark Art Center Signage – Costs for signage for Watermark Art Center rain gardens is \$210 each, \$160 each for installation, totaling \$740 for two signs. **Motion by Sam Christenson to approve purchase and installation of two signs for Watermark Art Center. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**
- 1W1P Planning Grant Extension – Mississippi River Headwaters 1W1P planning grant currently ends 6/30/21. There is currently approximately \$100,000 left to spend down, and Plan will not be approved until fall. **Motion by Sam Christenson to extend the 1W1P planning grant to 6/30/2022. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**

Supervisors' Report

- Mississippi River Headwaters One Watershed, One Plan – Zach provided an update on the 1W1P review process. The Plan is currently in the formal review and comment period. Draft plan is available on the Watershed website.
- Thief River One Watershed, One Plan – Planning Committee meeting scheduled for March 26.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

Regular Board Meetings

- April 15, 2021
- May 20, 2021
- June 17, 2021

Motion by Ruth Trask to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Ray Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved. Meeting adjourned.

5-20-21 Samuel Gray Recording Secretary
Date