



Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

2211 2nd Ave NW Suite 200 Faribault, MN 55021

Phone: (507) 332-5408 www.riceswcd.org

RICE S.W.C.D.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY – July 9, 2025 – 8:00 am

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Bongers, Richard Peterson, Al Malecha, Gene Kuntz, John Larson

Others in attendance: Steve Pahs, Al Henderson, Commissioner Charlie Peters, Commissioner Jim Purfeerst, Taylor O'Bryan NRCS, Peggy Keilen, Jim Fisher

Meeting called to order at 8:00 am by Chairman Richard Peterson.

June Board Minutes:

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Roger Bongers to approve the June board minutes as written. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

June financial statement and bills payable:

The district manager reviewed the financial statement and bills payable for June.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to approve the June financial statement and bills payable, subject to audit. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Project encumbrance report – information: this report was reviewed.

CONSENT AGENDA: (payment approval):

- A. John Thomas CRP24-20-CC, final cover crop payment - \$1,799.00
- B. John Thomas CRP24-21-CC, final cover crop payment - \$2,100.00
- C. Aaron Little CRP24-14-CC, final cover crop payment - \$1,190.00
- D. Jack Schwab SWCD 25-01, final cover crop payment - \$1,192.00

A motion by Al Malecha, seconded by Roger Bongers to approve the consent agenda items. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Stewardship Summit: SWCD Governance & Leadership Essentials – Information:**

September 10 & 11, 2025, St. Cloud MN

The information for the Stewardship Summit was shared.

- B. **DNR Well Observation Agreement - action:**

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the DNR Well observation agreement for fiscal year 2026. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

C. 2026 Budget - action:

District Manager reviewed the 2026 draft budget, which was submitted to Rice County on July 8th. Final budget will be presented for approval in December. The District Manager will present the draft budget to the county board later in July.

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by John Larson to approve the 2026 budget as presented. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

D. Conservation Building volunteer opportunities during fair - information:

The Rice County Fair runs July 16th to July 20th, 2025. Rice SWCD always has an information booth set up in the Conservation Building. A sign-up sheet for volunteer opportunities to staff the booth was passed around at this meeting.

E. Edward Jones CD expiring July 2025 - action:

The 12-month Edward Jones CD, valued at \$52,000.00 is set to expire in July. The District Manager recommends renewing the CD for another twelve months at 4% interest. The CD can only be whole numbers.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to approve renewing the Edward Jones CD of \$54,000.00 for 12 months at 4% interest, with the remaining interest to be deposited back into the checking account. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

F. Planning communication letter for 2024 audit - informational:

The planning communication letter is generated by the audit company of Peterson Company LTD, certified public accountants, with whom the Rice SWCD has contracted to perform the 2024 audit. This letter spells out what the accountant's responsibilities are as well as the responsibilities of the Rice SWCD.

G. Matt Purfeerst 2025 WAGZ-RC-01, WASCOB - \$3,679.23 - action:

This contract is for a water and sediment control basin located in a high priority area of the Zumbro river watershed.

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Gene Larson to approve the Matt Purfeerst 2025WAGZ-RC-01 contract for a water and sediment control basin for \$3,679.23. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NRCS REPORT:

Taylor O'Bryan presented the following report:



July 9th, 2025

NRCS Report for the Rice SWCD Board Meeting

General:

- ⇒ Taylor, Cody, and Lucas are working out of the Faribault Office
- ⇒ Chris is working out of the office a few days a week, will be in other offices in our team the rest of the time.

Farm Bill Updates:

CSP:

- ⇒ FY25 Sign Up 1 Deadline is past, we are taking applications for sign up 2

EQIP:

- ⇒ EQIP FY26 Sign Up 1 deadline announced for August 1 – this is months earlier than in the past.
- ⇒ All IRA applications from this year on hold indefinitely – some have been selected to be funded in other non IRA funding pools. It looks like this is the only way they will be funded going forward

CRP:

- ⇒ Still waiting to hear what applications have been chosen from first sign up
- ⇒ 2nd sign up is open until Aug 31st 2025
- ⇒ We are beginning year 3 and expiration spot checks that will continue through the summer.

WETLAND/HEL:

- ⇒ Rice County has 23 requests awaiting HEL determination for new land from the compliance team
- ⇒ Rice County has 33 requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the compliance team

Upcoming Events/Deadlines:

- Conservation Planner Bootcamp will be happening in Faribault from July 21st to July 25th, Cody, Kim, and Milagros from our team will be attending
- We are changing NRCS team boundaries effective July 14th
 - Old Team: Rice, Dakota, Washington, Ramsey, Le Sueur, Scott, Carver
 - New Team: Rice, Dakota, Washington, Ramsey, Goodhue, Wabasha

FSA report presented by Taylor Carlson:

Taylor Carlson was absent and unable to present the following report:



Rice County, Minnesota

2800 1st Avenue NW, Suite 500
Faribault, MN 55021
Taylor.Carlson@usda.gov
(507) 332-7418 ext 108

TO: Rice County Soil and Water Conservation District Board

FROM: Rice County Farm Service Agency

SUBJECT: July 2025 Board Meeting

Old Business

Acreage Certification

- July 15th is the reporting deadline, so please get in and get it done ASAP!

COC Elections – Nomination Period Opens June 16, 2025 and ends August 1, 2025

- Must reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) and be an eligible voter in the LAA to be an eligible candidate.
- Rice County – LAA 1 is up for election
 - Erin, Forest, Webster, Wheatland

2023/2024 Supplemental Disaster Assistance

- The American Relief Act of 2025 signed into law on Dec. 21, 2024, provided funds toward disaster recovery assistance.
 - Emergency Commodities Assistance Program (ECAP)
 - Signup open now through August 15, 2025.
 - Applications will be pre-filled with 2024 certified acreage for eligible commodities.
 - Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for Drought and Wildfire
 - ELRP payments will be made to livestock producers who have an approved 2023 and/or 2024 Livestock Forage Program (LFP) application on file for grazing losses due to eligible droughts.
 - Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for Flooding
 - Provide assistance for losses due to flooding, currently requires more time due to software changes.
 - *Target sign-up date of August 18, 2025*
 - Supplemental Disaster Relief Program
 - Provide assistance to producers for necessary expenses due to losses of revenue, quality or productions of crops due to weather related events in 2023 and 2024.
 - *Target sign-up date of July 7, 2025, for indemnified losses*
 - *Target sign-up date of September 15, 2025, for uncovered losses*

Farm Service Agency

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

New Business

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- At this point, we still have not heard anything on acceptance of offers submitted during the first batching period ending June 6, 2025.
- Second batching period for continuous CRP signup 63 offers submitted after June 6, 2025, has a deadline of July 31, 2025.
 - We are unaware if any offers will be accepted from this batching period.
 - It all depends on the number of acres available after the acceptance of offers during the first batching period
- Additional details will be provided in the near future

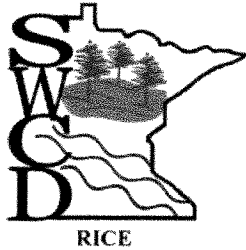
County Committee (COC) Meeting; Regular sessions are open to the public (0:15-0:30)

- July 22nd at 8:30AM is the next Rice COC Meeting.
- July 30th at 8:30 AM is the next Le Sueur COC Meeting.

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DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:



Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

2211 2nd Ave NW Suite 200 Faribault, MN 55021

Phone: (507) 332-5408 www.riceswcd.org

July 2025 District Manager's Report

The past month was focused on getting the budget put together, arranging the interseeding work, and lots of odds and ends.

Other activity this past month:

- Did one sampling event for algal bloom testing
- Attended the RCPP Soil Health refresher course
- Met with the Meyer's to talk about the conservation award
- Attended the area resolutions meeting
- Lower MN-East meeting on CRP incentives
- Participated in the Cannon River Ag Collaborative meeting
- Cannon flood control structure meeting
- RIM easement work with City of Faribault on moving a wetland outlet
- Planning for Haney Masterclass workshop
- Prep for fair booth and nitrate testing
- Meeting with Hunt Lake Association on draft lake plan
- Meeting onsite with O'Connor for possible grassed waterway

The next 30 days will include a continuation of lots of meetings, semi-annual reporting for a few grants, site visits for potential projects, county fair activities including the Outstanding Conservationist Award, one field day at the Honken farm, and preparation for presenting our budget request to the Rice County Board of Commissioners. We also will be spending considerable time on the RCPP Soil Health program that is expected to roll out by the first week of August.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Pahs

SUPERVISOR REPORTS:

Richard Peterson: attended the area resolution meeting in June. Shared an article in the Star Tribune that highlights what has been planted for crops in Minnesota the last 100 years.

Al Malecha: having issues with water hemp on his farm.

Roger Bongers: crops have taken off and water clarity on Lake Mazaska is still pretty good.

Gene Kuntz: attended the area resolutions meeting. No resolutions to be presented. Interesting visit with other area SWCD staff.

John Larson: upcoming meeting for the SE Area TSA7, but is unable to attend. Asking if someone could fill in for him.

Staff Reports:

Emmie Scheffler:

returned from maternity leave on June 30th. This past month, I spent time working on figuring out potential funds to implement the Upper Cannon Flood Study. In July, I will be catching up on engineering work and working on some RIM scenarios and inspections. I will also be prepping for the August Cannon board meeting and working on reporting for those grants. Working with Kate (TSA7) on a project on French Lake, hoping to have a contract ready at the next board meeting. Also working with US Fish and Wildlife on some WASCOS on a field they want to turn into prairie.

Teresa DeMars

Past Month

- Outstanding conservationists interview
- Rice County Fair prep
- July newsletter
- CRWJPO video media planning
- Peterson Interseeding Field Day
- Vacation

Next Month

- Rice County Fair
- Passport to Agriculture
- August newsletter
- Website upgrades and compliance
- RCPP marketing

Alan Kraus:

- Soil Health Incentive Programs – RCPP Funding
 - RCPP Funding is waiting for confirmation – but could get underway by mid-August
 - Continued discussions with Rice & Steele SWCD staff on outreach & program details
- Rice SWCD Cover Crop Interseeder
 - Completed interseeding for 10 farmers, planted 913 acres
 - Checking fields for germination – looks very good
 - Collected all herbicide info to learn about limitations
- Bridgewater Streams project
 - MPCA is going to fund tile drainage sampling through 2027 – Clean River Partners will do the work
 - May present results at Steele County Fair
- Rice-Steele Soil Health Nitrogen Rate Project
 - 8 farmers are in the project
 - All plots are established and corn is planted and N rates applied
 - 2-day Haney Soil Health Testing Masterclass is set for Aug 20-21
 - Invitations were sent to 95 people

- MDA & Great Lakes Cover Crop Project
 - Collected and submitted 10 cover crop samples
 - Analyzed for N, P, K & Carbon
 - Article submitted to area newspapers
- Soil Health Trailer
 - Planning to use it at 2 events this summer
 - Received grant to purchase equipment and posters of cover crop root systems
- Looking ahead
 - Collect soil trays for rainfall simulator
 - Finalize details for Masterclass & Honken Farm Field Day
 - Prep for RCPP funding opportunity

Al Henderson

Last month:

- MN Wetland Professionals Certification in training
- WCA Applications
- HABs sampling
- Buffer and WCA site visits

Current/Next Month:

- WCA applications/site visits
- Buffer monitoring
- Agronomy 101 training
- County fair
- Passport to Ag

Provided more detail regarding the Algal Bloom sampling for the MPCA.

Commissioner Jim Purfeerst: Notified yesterday that the SNAP program is being discontinued effective September 1st. Rice County Farm Family of the year is awarded to John and Karen Zimmerman. Has suggested that the SWCD present periodic updates to the county board each year to keep them aware of the work we do.

Commissioner Charlie Peters: Highway Department is working on ditch cleaning, mowing, drainage ditch repairs, etc. A bear and her cub have been spotted in his area of the county.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:

UPCOMING EVENTS: keep checking our website for event information:

July 9 Rice SWCD Board Meeting, 8:00 AM, at the Rice SWCD office in Faribault.

July 10 Weed Science Field Day by the University of Minnesota-Extension, 8:30 am - 1:00 pm in Rosemount.

July 15 Organic Fruit and Vegetable Field Day by the University of Minnesota-Extension, 5:00 - 8:00 pm in Falcon Heights.

July 16-20 Rice County Fair in Faribault.

July 22-23 MNGLCA Grazing School in Pipestone.

July 28 Roots & Rotation on the Honken Farm by the University of Minnesota-Extension, 4:00 - 8:00 by Faribault.

July 31 Passport to Agriculture at the Rice County Fairgrounds, 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm in Faribault

August 5 Unlocking Conservation Resources for Communities & Farms by Renewing the Countryside, 12:00 - 2:00 pm in Owatonna.

August 6 August Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting, 9:00 am in Cannon Falls.

August 21-22 Adapting Grazing and Fencing Workshop by the University of Minnesota Extension, by Dover and Stewartville.

September 13 All Things Oats & Oat Mill Tour by Practical Farmers of Iowa, 4:00 - 6:00 pm in Albert Lea

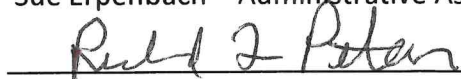
ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn by John Larson, seconded by Roger Bongers. All aye, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 am.

Submitted by:



Sue Erpenbach – Administrative Assistant



Board Member –