



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 15, 2026 – 8:00 am

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

Others in attendance: Steve Pahs, Alan Kraus, Teresa DeMars, Emmie Scheffler, Jenny Simek FSA, Lucas Altwegg NRCS, Taylor O'Bryan NRCS, Commissioner Charlie Peters

Meeting called to order at 8:00 am by Chairman John Larson.

June board minutes – action:

A motion Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the June minutes as written.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

June financial statement and bills payable – action:

The June financial statement was reviewed by the District Manager.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Roger Bongers 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 SHD 26-01, res. mgmt. and No-Till - \$1,547.50

A motion by Al Malecha, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the consent agenda items as listed:

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Ed Jones CD – 12 mth - \$54,000.00 – up for renewal on July 17th – action:

This CD is up for renewal. Interest earned puts the CD at \$57,000.00. It is recommended to roll the \$57,000.00 over into a new 12-month CD at approximately 4.15% interest.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Roger Bongers to approve re-enrolling the \$57,000.00 into a new 12-month CD. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

B. Reliance Bank potential CD - action:

District Manager has reached out to Reliance Bank about CD rates, awaiting response. Would like to enroll another \$200,000.00 into a CD.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to authorize the District Manager to move \$200,000.00 into a new CD with the bank with the best interest rate. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

C. #066-03-19 – amendment to change contract #066-02-19 to #066-03-19, change contract amount – action:

This item was tabled at the previous board meeting due to awaiting signatures from contract holder. This contract was signed up under third round of funding but the number was typed incorrectly on the contract. This amendment will correct that. Also, not all of the contracted acres were used under the practice so the contract amount is reduced.

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the contract amendment to correct the contract number and reduce the contract amount.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried

D. #066-03-19 – res. mgmt. and no-till, pymt 1 - \$1,855.00 - action:

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the payment of \$1,855.00 for contract #066-03-19.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

E. Policy on WASCOPS (farmable vs. grassed) - discussion:

Farmable basins are more expensive than grassed, therefore, it is recommended that our cost share policy language be changed to include stipulation that the landowner pays the extra for a farmable basin. Policy changes will be drafted and brought to next meeting for approval.

F. DNR Well Observation Agreement – action:

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Richard Peterson to accept the DNR Well Observation Agreement for another year.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

G. Strategic Planning Session - discussion:

District Manager sent out a survey of dates for the Strategic Planning Session. August 18th is the date available for the majority. District Manager will proceed with scheduling.

H. 2026 Private Well Protection Grant application for \$85,680.00 - action:

Rice SWCD, along with Rice County Public Health would like to apply for this grant to test 240 wells in Rice County.

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the application for the 2026 Private Well Protection Grant.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

I. \$150 for collecting soil trays at 3 farms (\$50 each) - action:

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the \$150 for collecting soil trays at 3

farms, \$50 each.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NRCS REPORT: written and presented by Taylor O'Bryan

July 15th, 2026

NRCS Report for the Rice SWCD Board Meeting

General:

- ⇒ Lucas is working out of the Faribault office
- ⇒ Eleanor has moved on from the NRCS
- ⇒ Taylor is working out of the Faribault office 2 days a week and the Farmington Office 3 days a week
- ⇒ Taylor is covering Farmington office with counties of Washington, Ramsey, and Dakota
- ⇒ 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:

- ⇒ 4 CSP contracts in Rice county selected
- ⇒ Sign up 2 is open for CSP

EQIP:

- ⇒ 4 selected in Rice county – the 4th was selected last week
- ⇒ Sign up 2 is open for EQIP

CRP:

- ⇒ Continuous Sign up: 45 Selected in Rice County
- ⇒ General Sign Up: 4 Selected in Rice County
- ⇒ We are beginning summer status reviews of CRP

WETLAND/HEL:

- ⇒ Rice County has 154 requests awaiting HEL determination for new land from the compliance team
- ⇒ Rice County has 46 requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the compliance team

Upcoming Events/Deadlines:

FSA report prepared by Taylor Carlson, presented by Jenny Simek:



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 2026 Board Meeting

Old Business

Acreage Reporting

- July 15th is the reporting deadline.
- Producers can certify in-person or digitally. Producers can also grab their maps in-person or can request them digitally.

FSA County Committee (COC)

- Nomination period begins on June 15, 2026, and ends August 3, 2026.
- Rice LAA2 is up for election (Shieldsville, Morristown, Walcott, Warsaw, and Wells Townships)

Assistance for Specialty Crop Producers (ASCF)

- Application period is open through Aug 7, 2026.
- Payment rates: (crop list is not all-inclusive)
 - Tier 1 - \$650 per acre: Aronia/Garlic/Mushrooms/Strawberries
 - Tier 2 - \$225 per acre: Apple/Broccoli/Cucumbers/Tomatoes/Squash
 - Tier 3 \$65 per acre: Sweet corn
 - Beans and Peas - \$25 per acre

New Business

Base Acre Increase for Safety Net Program (ARC/PLC)

- Contact FSA by Aug. 31, 2026, if:
 - Acreage history data is incorrect or missing,
 - There are "subsequent acres" listed on the producer's Base Allocation summary,
 - If the producer elects to opt out of receiving any additional base acres.

July CCC Interest Rates announced through Notice FI-3479

- FSFL 3-year term - 4.125%
- FSFL 5-year term - 4.250%
- FSFL 10-year term - 4.500%

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

- Next COC meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.

Farm Service Agency

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

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:

Vacation in July.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS:

Gene Kuntz: no water hemp yet. Helicopters out spraying fungicide.

Al Malecha: in a cover crop program, pays \$15 an acre, very easy to sign up.

Roger Bongers: from Brainerd to Wisconsin the crops look excellent.

Richard Peterson: crops from Mankato to Lake City look great.

John Larson: TSA7 meeting on Friday, July 17th.

Staff Reports:

Emmie Scheffler:

This past month, I have been working on engineering designs, sent out RIM inspection letters, worked on 3 Rim application, a shoreline workshop for the CRWJPO, lake sampling, and other misc items. Coming up, I will be prepping for the August CRWJPO meeting and bus tour, helping with the fair, and working on engineering and RIM inspections.

Al Henderson:

Last/Current Month

- WCA applications
- WCA site visits
- Verifying restoration for WCA Violations
- Buffer monitoring
- Assisting Teresa with the Jefferson planting
- DNR well readings
- Assisting with lake sampling

Next Month:

- DNR well readings
- WCA Violation follow ups
- WCA applications reviews
- WCA site visits
- Buffer monitoring and letter prep
- Technical Assistance to landowners as it comes up
- Farm communications training
- Passport to Ag
- County Fair

Teresa DeMars:

Past Month

- Women in Conservation event
- July newsletter
- Vacation July 4th
- Jefferson Prairie Planting
- Southeast MN Soil Health Bus Tour Strip Till Conference marketing

Next Month

- Rice County Fair
- Passport to Ag
- Soil Health Bus Tour National Strip Tillage Conference
- August newsletter
- Wildlife at Work Field Day at Sharing Our Roots Farm

Alan Kraus:

- Attended 3 field days
 - UMN – Extension Waseca Research Center
 - Scott Lightly farm – Winter Camelina
 - TJ Kartes farm – Winter Camelina
- Spring interseeding program
 - Final total acres planted – 321.5
 - 8 farmers utilized the service
 - Checked cover crop emergence on all fields
- Soil Health Incentive Programs
 - RCPP Funding ~\$4000 to be allocated
 - LCCMR Cover Crop program – waiting for program details to conduct outreach - \$240,000 to allocated over 3 years
 - BWSR Soil Health Delivery ~\$4500 remaining to be allocated
- Bridgewater Streams project
 - Water sampling continues – by Clean River Partners
- Rice-Steele Soil Health Nitrogen Rate Project
 - All plots are completed
 - Working with Continuum Ag to determine Carbon Intensity (CI) scores on the plots
- SE Minnesota Bus Tour to the National Strip-till Conference
 - 38 of 50 seats are filled
- Looking ahead
 - Continue planning for Soil Health Bus Tour to Strip-till Conference
 - Prep for Passport to Ag
 - Begin outreach for LCCMR Cover Crop program
 - Work with Freeborn Area Soil Health Team on September field day – interseeded cover crops & compost extract

Commissioner Charlie Peters: Rice County Fair and Passport to Ag are coming up. County fixed a portion of Cty Rd 23. Actively spraying for Wild Parsnips. County will be taking over the administration of the SNAP program next year, without any additional funding.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: CRWJPO bus tour on August 5th. Zumbro 1W1P next meeting is August 13th. Lower MN East WS next meeting will be in late August.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

July 15 Rice SWCD July Board of Supervisors Meeting 8:00 am in Faribault.

July 15 Optimizing Cover Crops for Your Unique Operation, by CTIC & Farmers for Soil Health, 8:30 am in Barnesville, MN

July 15-16 Youth Tractor & Farm Safety by the University of Minnesota - Extension in Zumbrota.

July 21 Wildlife at work: Birds, Beavers, Bats, & Beneficials on the Farm by Wild Farm Alliance, 8:00 am to 12:30 pm by Northfield.

July 22- 25 Rice County Fair in Faribault.

July 24 Pasture Tour: Great Heritage Farm by Women in Conservation, 5:00 - 8:00 pm in Winthrop.

July 30 Passport to Agriculture by Rice County ag organizations, 4:00 - 8:00 pm at the Rice County Fairgrounds in Faribault.

August 1 Wingspan: Melinda Vaughn School Pollinator Fundraiser, 3:00 - 6:00 pm near Dundas.

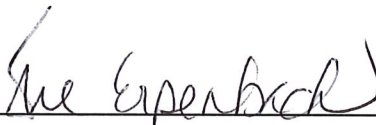
August 5-7 Southeast Minnesota Soil Health Bus Tour to the 2026 National Strip-Tillage Conference by the Rice and Steele SWCD in Springfield, IL.

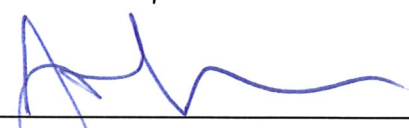
August 8 River Bend Ramble by River Bend Nature Center, 4:30 pm in Faribault.

ADJOURN:

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Al Malecha to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 am.
All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Submitted by:





Board Member –