STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna MN 55060
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www.steeleswcd.org

The regular monthly meeting of the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was called to order by Dave Melby at 4:00 PM on Wednesday May 13, 2026 at the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District, 235 Cedardale Drive SE, Owatonna MN 55060.

SWCD Supervisors Present:	**SWCD Staff Present:**	**Others Present:**	**Absent:**
Mark Ihlenfeld, Secretary	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adrienne Gransee	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Ian Pringle	Leanna Smeby, NRCS	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Alan Krause	Shane Bugeja, BWSR	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Adam Arndt	Roger Wacek	

The May agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

The April minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

The April Treasurer's Report was read by Hagen. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hansen, to approve the April Treasurer's Report. Motion was carried by voice vote.

Bills: (See attached) Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve paying the bills. Motion was carried by voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Envirothon – Dan Hansen, Dave Melby and Adrienne Gransee attended the Envirothon event on May 6 and the Byron Sportsman Club. Both board members expressed enjoying the event and being impressed by the level of participation and the time invested by some of the teams in preparing for the event. They also commented on the repeat participation of many of the students. Gransee reported that there were a total of 156 students from 7 schools that participated in the event this year.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Cost Share Contracts – Cannon 1W1P – Pringle presented the contracts, listed below, for approval. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve the contracts. Motion passed by voice vote.
    - 26-ST-001-Brown, Waterway, $7,425
    - 26-ST-002-Terpstra, Waterway & Basins, $22,998.75
    - 26-ST-003-Ahrens, Waterway, $8,085

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Conservation Award Winner List – The Board was provided the 2025 candidate list to review. There was some discussion about possible additions for consideration for the 2026 awards. Winners will be chosen at the June board meeting.

3. Election Filing Dates – May 19 through June 2 - $20 fee – Gulbransen reminded the Supervisors who are up for reelection and planning to run about the filing dates and required fee.

4. Local Workgroup Meeting – May 20, 9AM – Dodge Center Office – The board was reminded of the NRCS local workgroup meeting. Those interested in attending may do so in person or virtually.

5. TSA Resolution – Gulbransen presented the resolution from the TSA. It presents a need for increased funding from the State. The TSA has not had a funding increase in ten years and based on their workload assessment they need to increase their capacity by 110% to continue to provide adequate support.

6. Soil Health Technician Resolution – Gulbransen presented the resolution that he and Al Krause wrote. The resolution requests that the State continue to fund the Soil Health Technician positions. It talks about the benefits that these specialized positions have provided and requests that the grant funding these positions be continued. The Board expressed support for submitting it to the Area 7 for consideration.

7. Fleet Farm Liability Waiver – Fleet Farm has agreed to allow those attending the Strip-till bus tour to park their vehicles in their parking lot for the duration of the tour. There may be a liability waiver required, Gulbransen will keep the Board updated on that as the event comes closer.

8. Upper Cannon Watershed Flood Study – Request for Match Update – This subject was brough up at the April Board meeting and tabled for further consideration. In the span in between meetings, Le Sueur County agreed to provide the missing match for the Federal grant.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith and Lezlie Sorensen presented the monthly report for NRCS. Smith provided an update on EQIP, CSP and RPP. He also stated that he has been working on making site visits and certifying practices on current contracts. Sorensen provided a CRP update. There will be 65 contracts reenrolled and 1 new general signup. The plan is for the District to assist with plan writing again this year.

Shane Bugeja reported that as anticipated all of the RCPP funds have been distributed as of April 24, and there are currently no updates on the possibility of future funding for the program. He also reported on three other grant opportunities, Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape, Multipurpose Drainage Management, and Clean Water Legacy Partners. All of these programs are accepting applications.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen reported that WCA has been more active this month and he has also been occupied working with the engineer on ditch projects. In addition, he made time to stop by the Owatonna plant sale to support the students who assisted during tree week.

Alan Krause assisted with unloading and packing trees prior to pick up. He has been busy with the planning for the bus tour and it is currently half full. In addition Krause has been getting samples for the nitrogen trial plots and getting cover crop photos for a Department of Ag project. He also reported that there is a cover crop funding opportunity through LCCMR available until July 1st.

Adrienne Gransee reported briefly on the Envirothon. She has begun getting the materials requested ready for the audit that will take place June 8th. She also reported on the Grassland Gala that she attended.

Ian Pringle stated that tree pick went smoothly and there are a few trees remaining to be picked up. He has been making site visits with Al Krause and Jim Smith. He has also been delivering the drills to those needing them for seeding.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Hansen, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Adrienne Gransee

Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

May Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co.	**May Rent**			**$792.00**
Spectrum	**Internet**			**$89.99**
Chad Billat	**Easements Services**			**$1,209.00**
Eric Gulbransen	**115 miles @ .725**			**$83.38**
Schumacher's	**Trees**		**$20,042.75**	
	Shipping		**$750.00**	**$20,792.75**
Poly Pak Plastics	**Tree Bags**			**$160.32**
DeWitt	**Matting & Staples**		**$929.76**	
	Shipping		**$302.91**	**$1,232.67**
Schlatter's	**Tile probes and tips**			**$476.50**
Elan	**Gas**		**$140.57**	
	Meeting Registration		**$50.00**	
	Cell Phone		**$89.60**	
	Ranger Battery		**$148.96**	
	Field Supplies		**$49.48**	
	Wix Extended Email		**$29.00**	
	QuickBooks Payroll Fee		**$30.07**	
	Postage		**$234.00**	
	Fertilizer		**$270.34**	
	Student Snacks		**$114.87**	**$1,156.89**
			TOTAL	**$25,993.50**