

# Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting

January 16, 2025

Commissioners' Conference Room

701 Minnesota Ave. NW

Bemidji, MN 56601

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

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

**Others Present:** Brent Rud – District Manager  
Claire Hansen – ESD/SWCD  
Katelyn Bergstrom – ESD/SWCD  
Dan Gackle – ESD/SWCD  
Rose Moore – ESD/SWCD  
Jody Peek – NRCS

Work Session: The Board discussed the Keep It Clean (KIC) fish house. Brent Rud noted he brought the fish house to Lake of the Woods and brought it out on the ice. He notes there should be a rental agreement to use the KIC fish house, to help spread the KIC message. Rather than having the fish house only in parking lots and to use the fish house as intended. The fee would have to cover the cost of propane and other minor expenses. The Board discussed what the fee should be. In addition, the board discussed adding language in the rental agreement to not drink alcoholic beverages while using KIC fish house and to have renters of the KIC fish house be prepared to answer questions about the KIC program and mission from the public.

Board Chair Shane Bowe called the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting for January 16, 2025, officially to order at 9:30 a.m.

### **Approval of the Agenda:**

Brent Rud added an agenda item, 5.b.vi “Vehicles” with BA needed. **Sam Christenson to approve the January 16, 2025, agenda. Motion seconded by Rachel Gray. Motion carried and approved.**

### **Secretary’s Report:**

**Motion by Sam Christenson to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2024, SWCD meeting. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Ruth Trask presented the IFS statement for December 2024. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the December 2024 Treasurer’s Report. Motion seconded by Ray Hendrickson. Motion carried and approved.**

**Reports:**

NRCS Report - Jody Peek

- Staffing Update: Jody noted there are two new employees in Bagley, a Forester, and a Soil Health Conservationist. She noted there is no technical support in Baudette, and Bemidji will be covering in Baudette. A hiring freeze is likely this coming January 20<sup>th</sup>. And on Jan 26<sup>th</sup> is the start date for Thane E. the Non-supervisory DC in Bemidji.
- EQUIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) & CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program): There are 27 EQUIP applications looking to move forward. The Board discussed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and NRCS practices. There has been 78 CSP applications for 2025.
- General Items: Jody has sent reminder letters to producers about ordering trees. She also noted the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Version 2 (RUSLE2) training coming up soon. The Board discussed what RUSLE2 training is, and examples of what this tool looks like in practice.

District Manager – Brent Rud

- **Motion by Sam Christenson to keep elected officers in their current positions as Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relation. Motion seconded by Rachel Gray. Motion carried and approved.**
- The Board discussed the 2025 Budget. Brent Rud noted the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) dues were paid. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the 2025 Budget. Motion seconded by Rachel Gray. Motion carried and approved.**
- Brent noted staff have updated the 2025 Workplan with upcoming projects. One project the Board discussed was County Geologic Atlas and how Beltrami SWCD is participating in adding data to the atlas. The Board discussed the issues surrounding buckthorn. Specifically, many landowners don’t know they have buckthorn on their property or don’t know how to manage it. The Board discussed how to support landowners in buckthorn management, such as organizing a buckthorn informational session to educate landowner and/or adding buckthorn identification as a requirement in Forest Stewardship Plans. Staff noted Itasca County had a successful outreach and turnout when they held a buckthorn informational session. Board discussed adding an item to the 2025 work plan, to develop a buckthorn management and action plan. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the 2025 Work Plan, with the addition of having a buckthorn management and action plan. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**
- The Board discussed the 2024 fiscal review and grant update.

- The Board discussed the replacement and purchase of a new vehicle. Brent noted the plan will be to buy a three-quarter ton truck to help haul heavy items such as the new no till drill. There is not a make or model decided yet, but Brent and Dan will be working on this. The new vehicle will be bought through the state bid system. The vehicle will be paid through the Buffer Law grant and Beltrami County will be putting in some money as well. **Motion by Rachel Gray to approve up to \$50,000 dollars towards a new three-quarter ton truck. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

Staff:

- Rose updated the Board that the tree sale is going well and the training she went to in Brainerd, Introduction to Onsite Installation, went well. Katelyn updated the board that she has been working on planning the water festival. She also noted that the storm water retrofit analysis is going well. Lastly, she and Claire went to the MN Forestry Council Meeting in Grand Rapids over the weekend, and it was an amazing event. Claire updated the Board that she has closed one easement she's been working on in Little Turtle, helped close out the HELP grant and created new financial trackers for 1W1P. In addition, she has been working on JAA training and invoicing.
- Dan updated the Board that he has been working on nutrient management plans since Beltrami County is a non-delegated feedlot county. He has also been working with Rachel to host an event with Centra Sota Cooperative to better support producers in nutrient management. This event is being held in Blackduck at the Senior Citizens Center on March 5<sup>th</sup> 8:30AM-11AM. He had meetings with NRCS and Red Lake DNR. Dan noted he is looking into taking the TAA route while he waits for JAA. Lastly Dan talked about the Hubbard County grazing workshop that is happening on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 9am-3pm at the Nary Community Center. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve a per diem for supervisors to attend the Hubbard County Grazing event on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

**Supervisors' Report**

- Sam: Would like broader participation in the buckthorn management and action plan. Discussed if it would be possible develop a resolution for buckthorn management. He asked staff to see what is already being done in Minnesota. Brent noted there has not been a lot of money to manage any terrestrial invasive species in the past.

**Upcoming Meetings/Events:**

Regular Board Meetings:

- February 20, 2025
- March 27, 2025
- April 17, 2025

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

# Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting

February 20, 2025

Commissioners' Conference Room

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Bemidji, MN 56601

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Claire Hansen – ESD/SWCD  
Dan Gackle – ESD/SWCD  
Rose Moore – ESD/SWCD  
Katelyn Bergstrom – ESD/SWCD  
Jody Peek – NRCS  
Thane E. – NRCS

Work Session – The Board discussed the end of the year budget review, TSA8 spending for 2024, 2024 staff time, and the 2024 All Grant Tracker.

Shane Bowe called the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting for February 20, 2025, officially to order at 9:30 a.m.

#### **Approval of the Agenda:**

**Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the February 20, 2025, agenda. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

#### **Secretary's Report:**

**Motion by Sam Christenson to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2025, SWCD meeting. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Ruth Trask presented the IFS statement for the revised December 2024 statement and the January 2025 statement. The Board discussed the corrections in the revised December 2024 statement. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the Revised December 2024 Treasurer's Report. Motion seconded by Ray Hendrickson. Motion carried and approved. Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the January 2025 Treasurer's Report. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**

#### **Reports:**

NRCS Report – Jody Peek and Thane E.

- Attended the Hubbard grazing workshop and it was a great turn out.

- Official hiring freeze started on January 20, 2025. Other policies have started like the Return-to-Work policy. Mass layoffs of probationary staff have started, and supervisors were not notified. Three staff from NRCS Bemidji office were terminated, 55 total staff across MN. In response to the federal policies, all staff in the office have printed off job descriptions and performance reviews. Jody noted that no one job position is safe from being terminated. There is a possibility for ACE contracts to be terminated as well, this along with all the other policies have greatly affected the office. The Continuing Resolution averted government shutdown until March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- The NRCS final program is down, and staff must request personal documents from accounts. Jody noted this is most likely because the government is scanning documents for possible DEI related documents.
- The IRA funding might be pulled, and this could terminate current contracts even after the project was started and paid for by the landowner. With these, SWCD might need to pick up the contracts if there is funding available.

#### District manager Brent Rud

- Manager's Report: Brent noted an Area 8 meeting is coming up on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and if supervisors would like to attend, let Rose know. He will send out the agenda for this meeting soon. Brent continued and noted e- link reporting went well, and the staff did a great job entering reports.
  - Brent updated the Board on the background of the Keep It Clean program. He noted the SWCD has spent a large amount of staff time on this program, because we have had grants to support it. But these grants are coming to an end. As a SWCD, there should a consideration to decrease staff time into the program. The end goal would be to have the MPCA to get more involved with the program and to have the MPCA better support for the program statewide. The Board discussed the success and pitfalls of the program and its management. In addition, Brent noted there needs to be a discussion of the priorities with One Watershed One Plan budget and the Keep it Clean Program.
- Audit 2025: Brent updated the Board with the letter from Peterson Company, who does the financial audit for the SWCD. The letter is asking to confirm if Beltrami SWCD would approve to use their company for the 2024 audit. He noted Peterson Company is the most used auditor for SWCD's that he knows of, and the Beltrami SWCD has used this company before with no problem. **Motion by Ruth Trask to approve the use of Peterson Company for the financial audit of Beltrami SWCD for 2024. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**
- Mailed Board Packets: The Board discussed what Board packet materials is or is not needed to be mailed.

#### Staff

- Staff Updates: Katelyn noted the MPCA reached out to her for possible projects the MPCA could help fund along the Mississippi. A professor from BSU reached out to Katelyn to present to his class about working in the Environmental and Natural Resource field and she is planning a trash cleanup day with the BSU Sustainability office and the City of Bemidji. Lastly the dates are set for the Water Festival, which are *May 29<sup>th</sup>, October 8<sup>th</sup>, and October 9<sup>th</sup>*. Claire noted she is trying to get more involvement with Environthon. She has been working on planning the fall tour, drone training, and the tree sale. She and Rose went to a NRCS collaboration meeting and scheduling

another Smart Salting workshop. Claire has also been working on easements on the Mississippi near Wolf Lake and is wrapping the process up. Lastly, she and Katelyn have been helping train and support the new Well Technician. Dan has been working on E-link and Upper/Lower Red Lake Plans. He has met with a wild rice grower as well as working on the exclusion fencing project. Rose has been working on the tree sale and updating the SWCD website to BSWR requirements.

- Katelyn presented a well sealing contract and the Board asked where the wells were in the county. **Motion by Sam Christenson to approve the cost share well sealing project. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**
- Katelyn presented the updated HR Green contract, which has Beltrami SWCD paying for all the cities in the Stormwater Retrofit Analysis, rather than splitting the cost with the Red Lake DNR. **Motion by Ray Hendrickson to sign the updated HR Green contract to pay for all the cities included in the Stormwater Retrofit Analysis. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**
- Katelyn presented the draft ULRB Budget that she will be presenting to the Policy Committee. She showed the Board what is in a small lake plan, how much it costs and went through an example. She went through the budget and explained the why different amounts are allocated to different categories. **Motion by Ray Hendrickson to approve of the ULRB Budget with the contingency that the ULRB Policy Committee approves of the budget presented. Motion seconded by Sam Christenson. Motion carried and approved.**
- Katelyn explained to continue with the BSU Basin project, there needs to be new bids put out since RL Larson will not honor the original bid since prices for material have changes so much over a year since they won the bid. The Board discussed what needs to happen for the BSU Basin project to continue and what needs to happen to re-open the bid process. **Motion by Sam Christenson to cancel the original contract with Arl Larson. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**
- **Motion by Ruth Trask to Authorize Moore Engineering put out new bids for the BSU Basin project. Motion seconded by Ray Hendrickson. Motion carried and approved.**
- Dan presented a plan for a flat rate cost share program for writing manure management plans. Dan noted he will be going to a training in Wilmer to better learn how write plans. Board discussed what a manure management plan is and what requirements are in accordance with the county and state. **Motion by Sam Christenson to approve to provide a cost share program for landowners for manure management plans. Motion seconded by Ruth Trask. Motion carried and approved.**
- Claire presented the DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Award. She explained she wrote the grant for creating pollinator habitat at logging landing sites, and the DNR awarded the grant to Beltrami SWCD. The Board discussed what the plan will be to prep the sites and if we are partnering with any other agencies. **Motion by Sam Christenson to enter into the agreement with the DNR and sign the agreement to accept the award for the DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant. Motion seconded by Ray Hendrickson. Motion carried and approved.**

## Supervisors Reports

- Sam: Noted that research has been done and has shown that buckthorn stands can be very detrimental to soybeans fields because aphids can overwinter and live in buckthorn.

**Upcoming Meetings/Events:**

Regular Board Meetings

- March 20, 2025
- April 17, 2025
- May 15, 2025

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