

# Minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee Meeting



**March 19, 2025**

*Stark & Billings SCD Tree Shed, 734 8th Ave SE, Dickinson, ND*

A meeting of the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by David Hill, Chair.

## **Committee Members and guests present:**

Emily Montgomery – *Area I Supervisor (via Zoom)*

Chris Walberg – *Area II Supervisor (via Zoom)*

David Hill – *Area III Supervisor, 2025 Chair*

Bob Martin – *Area IV Supervisor*

Jess O'Brien – *Area V Supervisor, 2025 Vice Chair*

Kelly Klosterman – *Governor Appointee (via Zoom)*

Hannah Nordby – *Area V Program Coordinator*

Lindy Berg – *Area I Program Coordinator (via Zoom)*

Paula Comeau – *NDSU Extension Program Coordinator (via Zoom)*

Amber Fetch – *ND State Soil Conservation Committee Administrative Assistant (via Zoom)*

Carrie Johnson – *NDSU Extension Assistant Director*

Kelli Schumacher – *Training Coordinator, Employees Association (via Zoom)*

Sarah Tunge – *Employees Association*

Dustin Krueger – *President, Employees Association*

Bonnie Twogood – *District Manager, Stark-Billings SCD*

Wes Frederick – *Association Board*

Warren Solberg – *Association Board*

## **Committee Members absent:**

Anthony Mock – *Governor Appointee*

## **Introductions**

SSCC member and NDSU Extension introductions.

## **Review of January Meeting Minutes**

- Bob made a motion to approve the 1.13.25 meeting minutes with the change that David chaired the meeting after SSCC elections. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

## **Review of Financials**

- Carrie went through a brief overview of financials. Ensured that what has not been spent due to not having a Program Coordinator for much of the year will be spent somewhere by the end of the fiscal year.
- NASCA dues should appear on the next fund statement.
- Will have a correction of removing the Data Processing Supply charge from the DART fund to the correct fund to make sure the appropriate amount of funding is available for SCDs going forward.

## **NDSU Extension Update**

- Legislative update from Carrie Johnson. Note that we're in the middle of it right now and things are still fluid. SB 2020 is the bill related to NDSU Extension.
  - Bob asked about the \$150,000 ask from the SSCC for additional funding. That has not been added to the current budget, but no current funding has been taken away.
- Extension staffing updates:
  - NDSU Extension just hired an Extension Veterinarian.
  - Andrea Bowman's position (Program Coordinator 50% Leadership and Civic Engagement & 50% Leadership Academy) is still open.
- SBARE input session dates for 2025 have been set.
  - Sept. 19 in Dickinson or Williston, Nov. 13 in Minot, and Dec. 10 and 11 in Fargo.

### **Employees Association Report—Dustin Krueger:**

- Dustin gave a brief report on scholarships from the Employees Association.
- Dustin noted that the Employees Association is working on a new website, particularly for training.
- Dustin gave an update on OHF funding.
- Dustin discussed three upcoming workshops from the Employees Association: cooler workshop, urban conservation outreach, windbreak technology course.
- Sarah discussed the strategic plan they've been working on with partners from across the state (NDSU Extension, Game and Fish, NRCS, State Forestry Service, etc.).

### **State Program Coordinator's Report – Paula Comeau:**

- Discussion of 2025 Leadership Academy—generally went well.
- Hope to plan dates for the coming few years so potential attendees can plan better.
  - Feb. 11 & 12, 2026, in Devils Lake (Level 1 & 2); Feb. 26, 2026, location TBD (Level 3)
  - Feb. 10 & 11, 2027, in Minot (Level 1 & 2); Feb. 25, 2027, location TBD (Level 3)
  - Feb. 9 & 10, 2028, in Bismarck (Level 1 & 2); Feb. 24, 2028, location TBD (Level 3)
- Paula, Lindy, and Hannah attended the DAM meeting and it went well.
- Paula attended the last partner's meeting and is planning to attend the next partner's meeting.

### **Area Program Coordinator Updates:**

- **Hannah, Area V:**
  - Hannah gave an oral report on things she's been doing since the last meeting.
    - **Meetings:** DAM, Employees Association Meetings (Directors Meeting and NDCDEA Business Meeting), Extension—West District Monthly Meeting.
    - **Connecting with SCDs:** 7 monthly meetings with various SCDs, helped with various SCD events, helped 2 SCDs update annual plans of work, and assisted 6 SCDs with one-on-one consultations.
    - **Training Opportunities:** 2 podcast episodes, 3 Coffee Talks, 1 Locally Led Meeting, LA levels 1–3, Facilitated meet and greets among 4 SCDs.
    - Will also be involved in several upcoming events with SCDs.
- **Lindy, Area I:**
  - Lindy gave an oral report on her activities since the last meeting.
    - Lots of networking and building relationships.
    - Helping a few SCDs get back on their feet that needed some help.
    - Working on getting some templates (job descriptions, job postings, etc.) updated.
    - Plan to work with SCDs in Area I to make sure they know about the resources available to them.
    - Will be working with Kelli S. on a Youth Employment Zoom meeting next week.
    - Working with Extension Agents and Districts on various projects.

### **Old Business:**

- Supervisor Education
  - Review of a new suggested SCD Supervisor Training Table NDSU Extension team has put together.
    - Board likes the chart and credit values—clearer and less confusing than the last one.
    - Jess made a motion to approve the new training table. Bob seconded. Motion to approve carried.
- State Assistance Funds (DART)
  - Clarification on Ranking
    - Sarah gave a brief history of the DART reporting tool and related funding and ranking.
    - SSCC has always reserved the right to change rankings that come out of the system.

- How to Improve Ranking
  - There has been some support lately for distributing funds equally to each district.
  - Prolonged discussion of how districts can improve their rankings from biennium to biennium.
  - Carrie suggested each Area representative from the board ask districts in their area whether they would prefer to have this funding divided out equally or continue with rankings.
  - Kelly suggested having a special Zoom meeting of the SSCC in 30 days to go over the DART ranking/funding discussion more.
    - David agreed with the above. Special meeting details will be determined at a later date.

#### **New Business:**

- Defining Roles among SSCC, NDCDEA, NDASCD, and NDSU Extension
  - Sarah suggested we postpone this to its own meeting in order to have enough time to discuss all of this and ensure there's proper representation from each relevant group.
  - Paula noted that this should be a starting point of the conversation, not the end of the conversation.
  - David agrees that closer relationships among these groups are important and has long been a goal for the SSCC.
- ND Game & Fish future state funding opportunities & listing SCDs as "contractor"
  - Paula noted an email she sent out to David, Jess, and NDCDEA. ND Game & Fish is interested in a contact list of potential contractors they could work with.
  - Dustin and Sarah both noted that districts cannot technically be contractors (don't have contractor licenses). There have been issues in the past related to districts being perceived as contractors. Sarah suggested instead listing districts as "contacts" or "resources." Also suggested using reclamation agreements or similar options rather than contracts.
  - Paula noted she wants to make sure Kevin with Game & Fish gets a response; Sarah said she would be happy to follow up and note that districts would be happy to be listed as resources (but not contractors).

#### **Next Committee Meeting:**

A special virtual SSCC meeting will be held in April for additional DART ranking discussions—a Zoom invite will be shared via email in advance of the meeting.

The next regular SSCC board meeting will be in June in Jamestown at the NDSU Extension Office. Details about the specific time and location will be shared via email in advance of the meeting.

#### **Adjournment:**

David called to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m.