

# Minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee Meeting



**June 30, 2025**

*Stutsman County Extension Office, 502 10th Ave SE, Jamestown, ND*

A meeting of the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order at 12:04 p.m. by David Hill, Chair.

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

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

Chris Walberg – *Area II Supervisor*

David Hill – *Area III Supervisor, 2025 Chair*

Bob Martin – *Area IV Supervisor*

Kelly Klosterman – *Governor Appointee*

Lindy Berg – *Area I Program Coordinator*

Paula Comeau – *NDSU Extension Program Coordinator*

Amber Fetch – *ND State Soil Conservation Committee*

*Administrative Assistant*

## **Committee Members absent:**

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

Anthony Mock – *Governor Appointee*

## **Review of March, April, May, & June Meeting Minutes**

- Kelly made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes from the in-person regular meeting on 3/19/25, the Zoom special meeting on 4/29/25, and the two email votes on 5/23/25 and 6/20/25. Emily seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

## **Review of Financials**

- Paula gave a brief overview of the financial report.
  - Extension overall took a 2% cut; the SSCC appropriated fund will be \$20,000 (as opposed to the \$25,000 it was this previous year).
  - Brief DART fund allocation update—funds are on track to be spent by the end of the biennium.

## **NDSU Extension Update**

- Paula noted that the 319 EPA grant report has been submitted to DEQ.
  - We have rolled over to the new grant as of April 2025.
- NDSU SSC website has been updated. We are working on making that robust and fixing some issues with the navigation and such.
- Leadership Academy Level 3 field trip.
  - Working with James River SCD to tour various projects there.
  - Anyone who attended Level 3 is welcome to attend the field trip on August 27, 2025.
- Extension staffing updates:
  - Leslie Stevens has taken the LCE Program Coordinator position that Andrea Bowman used to hold and will help with Leadership Academies going forward. She is working remotely and is in the early stages of getting used to her new role.

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

- No further report beyond the above Extension updates.

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

- **Hannah, Area V:**
  - A hard copy report was shared with the Committee since Hannah was unable to attend the meeting.
- **Lindy, Area I:**
  - Lindy gave an oral report on her activities since the last meeting.

### **Old Business:**

- Defining Roles Among SSCC/Extension, NDCDEA, and NDASCD
  - SSCC's role is pretty well defined in Century Code. The other entities have more wiggle room and need to focus on defining their roles. This was discussed at the April 25<sup>th</sup> partner meeting (see below), but there has been no resolution yet.

### **New Business:**

- April 25<sup>th</sup> Partner Meeting Recap
  - Meeting with Rhonda Kelsch, Sarah Tunge, Kelli Schumacher, and Dustin Kreuger went well.
  - The Committee is generally happy with the track we are on right now in terms of rebuilding the partnership.
- New SSCC Appointees
  - Paula will reach out to Mary Podoll and Rocky Bateman to see if they would like to be part of the board or, if not, if they know anyone who would like to.
  - Can begin the application process in September.
  - Paula will double-check on the appointed members' terms as well as the elected members' terms to make sure term limits are being properly followed.
- Mill Levy Changes
  - Worksheet and instructions provided by Rhonda and Sarah.
  - County Auditors are the go-to sources for more information on the property tax/budget caps.
  - The budget cap changes will need to be considered when discussing the new DART rankings.
- DART Ranking
  - A spreadsheet example of how the DART ranking could work based on the previous cash-on-hand numbers was shared with the SSCC.
  - The message from the SSCC going forward will be that districts are encouraged to levy up to the full 2.5 local mills if feasible. Legislative funding should supplement (not replace or precede) local funding.
  - The SSCC will use the old ranking for (at least) the next two quarters.
  - The Committee will revisit the ranking when we have more information on how the budget caps will affect mill levies, how the new cash-on-hand definition affects district reporting, etc.
- Future DART Overages Policy
  - After a lively discussion, Kelly made a motion that anything under \$5,000 will get distributed evenly across districts; if there are any overages larger than that, NDSU Extension will bring it to the SSCC for further discussion. Bob seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.
- NDDOT Roadway Improvement Letters, Surface Mining Permits, etc.
  - Kelly was curious if it's necessary for the SSCC to get these. Amber and Paula reminded the Committee that ND Century Code indicates that the Committee is meant to review and comment on these matters.

### **Next Committee Meeting:**

The regular SSCC board meeting will be in September in Bismarck, with the hope of having partner organizations involved as well. 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 2:20 p.m.