

Minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee Meeting



December 1, 2025

BSP Career Academy, Collaboration 217, 1221 College Dr., Bismarck, ND 58501

A meeting of the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order at 2:09 p.m. by David Hill, Chair.

Committee Members and guests present:

Emily Montgomery – *SSCC, Area I Supervisor*

Chris Walberg – *SSCC, Area II Supervisor*

David Hill – *SSCC, Area III Supervisor, Chair*

Bob Martin – *SSCC, Area IV Supervisor*

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

Kelly Klosterman – *SSCC Governor Appointee*

Mary Podoll – *New SSCC Appointee*

Bruce Schmidt – *New SSCC Appointee*

Doug Goehring – *Dept of Ag Commissioner*

Tom Claeys – *ND State Forester*

Kevin Kading – *ND Game and Fish*

Sarah Tunge – *Partnership and Programs Director, NDCDEA and NDASCD*

Kelli Schumacher – *Training Coordinator, NDCDEA*

Emilee Novak – *NPS Program Coordinator, ND DEQ*

Warren Solberg – *NDASCD Board, Area II*

Monte Bloms – *NDASCD Board President, Area III*

Steve Gilje – *NDASCD Board VP, Area III*

Gloria Jones – *NDASCD Board, Area IV*

Wes Frederick – *NDASCD Board, Area V*

Dave Carpenter – *Supervisor, Burleigh County SCD*

Jeremy Saeman – *Chair, Burleigh County SCD*

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

Hannah Nordby – *Area V Program Coordinator*

Paula Comeau – *NDSU Extension Program Coordinator*

Amber Fetch – *ND State Soil Conservation Committee Administrative Assistant*

Committee Members absent:

Anthony Mock – *Governor Appointee*

Review of Prior Meeting Minutes

- Jess made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes from the 6/30/25 meeting, the 9/15/25 special meeting, and the 10/16/25 email vote. Bob seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Review of Financials

- Paula gave a brief overview of the financial reports.

Partner Reports:

- ND Game & Fish – Kevin Kading gave an oral report focused on the Legacy Soil Health and Habitat Program in partnership with NDASCD and provided some written materials after the meeting. A brief discussion of the project/program ensued.
- ND Forest Service – Tom Claeys gave an oral report, including some deadline, pricing, and staffing changes at Towner Nursery.
- ND DEQ – Emilee Novak gave an oral report, including updates on NPS Program grant funding, updating the NPS Management Plan, and staffing changes, and provided a newsletter/written report as well.
- ND Dept of Ag – Doug Goehring gave an oral report, including updates on bird flu, equine herpes virus, screw worm, etc.; a potential railroad merger; chapter 11 filings in the grain industry; proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act; the announcement of two dairies in ND; trade agreements; assistance for farmers in the federal reconciliation package; Sec. of Ag. announced some assistance for livestock industry/consumers.
- NDASCD – Sarah Tunge gave an oral report, including the Legacy Soil Health and Habitat Program (with ND Game & Fish); partnering with the ND Dept of Ag on a statewide program; agreement with the Plant Materials

Center to help with funding; the Fargo Specialist Program with NRCS; operational changes at Lincoln-Oakes Nursery; and info on the NDASCD Convention.

- NDCDEA – Kelli Schumacher gave an oral report, including updates on a training website to be launched soon; working on securing funding for maintaining the training position and the website; plans on yearly windbreak and urban conservation workshops; DAM meeting in Bismarck at the Radisson in March.
- ND Dept of Water Resources – No representative; no report provided.
- USDA-NRCS – No representative; no report provided.

State Program Coordinator's Report – Paula Comeau:

- Paula gave an oral report, including:
 - Sharing more information on and templates related to the SBARE process with SCDs
 - NDSU Extension focusing more on supervisor education and less on employee education (since the NDCDEA trainer (Kelli) is in place now)
 - Updates on the DART ranking process
 - Doing research to get numbers to share with legislators on the value of SCDs.

Area Program Coordinator Updates:

- **Hannah, Area V:**
 - Hannah gave an oral report on her activities since the last meeting along with a written report.
 - Focus on bringing SCDs together, improving networking, building connections, etc.
 - Working with SCDs on creating and updating policy manuals.
 - Helping SCDs learn who to contact with specific questions.
- **Lindy, Area I:**
 - Lindy provided a written report on her activities since the last meeting (attached).

Old Business:

- Proposed Resolutions
 - Burleigh County SCD representatives brought concerns that led to their resolution, focused on a desire for the SSCC to be able to better assist smaller SCDs financially.
 - Lively and prolonged discussion of the proposed resolutions and, more generally, how to best help SCDs going forward in terms of legislative outreach.
 - Mary recommended we create a focused committee to facilitate better communication and collaboration between NDSU Extension, the SSCC, NDASCD, NDCDEA, and partners in hopes of better addressing the struggles faced by smaller SCDs. Kelly made a motion to accept. Emily seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

New Business:

- DART Program Proposed Additions
 - Discussion of adding a date after which we (the NDCDEA, with support from NDSU Extension) will automatically finalize any DART data forms and adding a place in DART for SCDs to upload their annual budget forms to add accountability. No action necessary.
- Towner County Issues
 - Discussion of Towner County SCD's lack of employees, lack of providing minutes, lack of meeting as a board, etc.
 - Bruce suggested meeting with the county auditor or something similar to get an audit of the district.
 - The Committee agreed to gather more information before the next meeting and come to a decision then.

- Policy for DART Payment Pauses
 - As above, the Committee will gather more information and discuss this more at the next meeting.
- Announcements of New SSCC Appointees & Thank You to Outgoing Members
 - Welcome, Mary Podoll and Bruce Schmidt! Goodbye and thank you, Kelly Klosterman!

Committee Paused Meeting at 4:53 p.m.; To Reconvene for Further Discussion During the NDASCD Convention

Reconvened 12/2/25 at 5:15 p.m. for Further Discussion After Resolution Meeting:

- The SSCC reconvened
- The Committee determined that 3 from the SSCC and 3 from the NDASCD should form the focused research committee to determine how to best improve funding to smaller SCDs.
- Things to explore:
 - A bill
 - Getting a legislator to carry the bill
 - Grants
 - Other state departments
- SSCC members to collaborate: Mary Podoll, David Hill, Bruce Schmidt (Chris as alternate)
- Bruce Schmidt provided input on historical lanes that the SSCC and NDASCD occupied for context.

Next Committee Meeting:

The next regular SSCC board meeting will be in late January or early February. A Doodle poll will be shared with Committee members to determine specifics. 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 5:28 p.m. CT

Lindy Berg, Area 1 Program Coordinator Updates

Coming up on 1 year, which has been about building relationships and learning the needs of the Area 1 SCDs. I feel as though I am still building some trust with folks, but overall, I feel good about the communication and steps that I have taken over the past year.

- Goal: to create opportunities to improve Area 1 collaboration.
 - o We have our first workshop in a couple of weeks to work on the annual plans of work.
 - o We continue to have our monthly check-ins for questions and updates.
- Goal: to provide hands-on support to individuals and SCDs
 - o have supported work groups, local demonstrations, and build local relationships with agents – (fall conference presentation)
 - o currently working with one SCD on updating and refining their job descriptions based on their specific duties and responsibilities, ultimately helping employees and supervisors understand the unique roles of employees and provide insight into current roles and future roles during turnover. Provides communication to supervisors, communicating specific duties, strengths, and needed modifications.
- Goal: Engage and support supervisors
 - o currently working with 3 SCDs and their succession plan to prepare for turnover and foster open communication between supervisors and employees.
 - o Excited for our next webinar this month on building relationships with commissioners, state attorney and auditor