

Minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee Meeting



August 12, 2026

Morrill Hall 212, NDSU, 1230 Albrecht Boulevard, Fargo, ND 58105

A meeting of the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by David Hill, Chair.

Committee Members and guests present:

Emily Montgomery – *SSCC, Area I Supervisor*

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

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

Bob Martin – *SSCC, Area IV Supervisor (via Zoom)*

Mary Podoll – *SSCC Appointee (via Zoom)*

Bruce Schmidt – *SSCC Appointee (via Zoom)*

Paula Comeau – *NDSU Extension Program Coordinator*

Amber Fetch – *ND State Soil Conservation Committee*

Administrative Assistant

Sarah Tunge – *NCDEA Vice President (via Zoom)*

Warren Solberg – *NDASCD Board Member*

Committee Members absent:

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

Review of Prior Meeting Minutes

- Emily made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes from the 4/13/26 meeting and 7/1/26 special meeting as written. Bob seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Review of Financials

- Paula gave a brief overview of the financial report.
 - Appropriated budget down to \$18,000 for FY27 (from \$20,000).

NDSU Extension Update

- Carrie Johnson was unable to attend, so no overall NDSU Extension update this meeting.

State Program Coordinator's Report – Paula Comeau:

- Paula gave an oral update on recent and ongoing activities the Extension team has been working on.
 - Water table video filmed with Emilee Novak with DEQ.
 - Working with Naeem Kalwar and DEQ on saline soil research and an NDSU Extension publication to go along with it; will print copies to have on hand and will send electronic copies to districts when ready.
 - Paula and Carrie to be meeting about requesting an extension on the EPA grant or just reapply.
 - Updates on the new Area Coordinator (Area II), Maria Teresa, starting next week (8/18/26).
 - Working with Dr. Laxmi Prasad on a watershed management training.
 - Working on two 4-H trunks for NDSU Extension related to soil salinity and watersheds.

Area Program Coordinator Updates:

- Lindy, Area I:**
 - An infographic from Lindy was shared with the Committee (attached) since Lindy was unable to attend the meeting.

Old Business:

- ND Century Code Updates for Governor Appointees
 - Have not heard anything back on the language that was submitted on changes to ND Century Code for soil conservation. This will likely not be taken back up until legislative session.
- Prioritize Resource Concerns
 - Mary suggested the SSCC come up with a statement of some kind about statewide resource concerns and what the SSCC prioritizes as a statewide organization.
 - Could potentially pull resource concerns from district APOWs.
 - Some recent concerns discussed have been drought, pest plants, weed control, erosion control (Grand Forks); erosion control (Stutsman).
 - David suggested the SSCC should be focused on the districts' resource concerns, to support the districts themselves rather than the SSCC having its own concerns.
 - The Conservation Leadership and Planning team will pull together a list of resource concerns from data already collected from districts to this point.

New Business:

- SSCC/NDCDEA MOU
 - Sarah Tunge brought up the MOU at the NDCDEA board meeting last week.
 - Prolonged discussion of language that should be changed in the current MOU.
 - Action steps: Paula and Sarah will work on edits and will update their boards; updated version will be shared prior to the next SSCC meeting and will be finalized at the NDASCD Annual Convention.
- SSCC/ND SU Extension MOU
 - Brief discussion of the MOU and some ideas for a signing ceremony at the NDASCD Convention.
 - Brief discussion of the Surface Mining Report. Suggested that we share the form we use to solicit information and go over that with the SSCC members at the next meeting.
- NDASCD Proposal to Dept of Ag
 - Prolonged discussion of the proposal the NDASCD sent to the Department of Agriculture.
 - Mary will communicate with the Agriculture Commissioner to get his response to the SSCC's report to him in writing.
 - The SSCC will wait for further discussion at the next subcommittee meeting and will decide how to move forward after that.
- SWCS Membership
 - Discussion of the pros and cons of obtaining membership in the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS).
 - Mary made a motion that the SSCC pays for membership in the SWCS and encourage staff to attend state meetings/conferences, etc. Emily seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.
- 3% County Property Tax Caps
 - Bob made a motion to send a letter to the Attorney General to find out if SCDs can go above the 3% county property tax caps based on current ND Century Code soil conservation law about increasing to 2.5 mills without county approval. Chris seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Next Committee Meeting:

The next regular SSCC board meeting will be November 30 in Bismarck prior to the NDASCD Convention and will include partner agencies. 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 3:16 p.m.