

# Minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee Meeting



**Tuesday, March 7, 2023**

**Lincoln Oakes Nursery, 3310 University Dr, Bismarck, ND 58504**

A meeting of the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order at 1:13 pm by Kelly Klosterman, Vice Chairman.

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

Donna Grann – *Area I Supervisor (via Zoom)*

Warren Solberg – *Area II Supervisor (via Zoom)*

David Hill – *Area III Supervisor (via Zoom)*

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

Wes Frederick – *Area V Supervisor, Chair (via Zoom)*

Kelly Klosterman – *Governor Appointee, Vice Chair*

Jodi Delozier – *NDSU Extension Program Coordinator*

Carissa Kittelson – *ND State Soil Conservation Committee Administrative Assistant (via Zoom)*

Carrie Johnson – *NDSU Extension (via Zoom)*

Kevin Kading – *ND Game & Fish Department*

Rhonda Kelsch – *NDASCD*

Thomas Claeys – *ND Forest Service*

Dustin Krueger – *NDCDEA President*

Richard Webb – *USDA-NRCS acting State Conservationist (via Zoom)*

Emilee Lachenmeier – *NPS Program Coordinator, Watershed Management*

Sarah Tunge – *presenter on DART program update*

Matt Lindsay – *Department of Water Resources*

## **Committee Members absent:**

Anthony Mock – *Governor Appointee*

## **SSCC Director's Report:**

- Introduction: new admin assistant, Carissa Kittelson
- Program Coordinator position update: Received applications from two really good candidates. They will be located in Area 3, 4, or 5.
- SCD appointments by SSCC: This process has been streamlined. Districts will be asked who they would like to appoint. They will contact Jodi with the name. Then Jodi will contact the Area supervisor. The Area supervisor will approve within 24 hours and then Jodi will let the district know when approved.
- Supervisor Training modifications: A supervisor self-reflection sent; received about 10 so far; if 50% by march, will have districts give to supervisors at meeting
- Will be working on microlessons for supervisors (10-15 minutes during board meetings). Looking at creating some podcasts, as well.
- Supervisor education – supervisors are not being explained the responsibilities of the job prior to accepting. Jodi is working on a supervisor roles and responsibilities sheet. It was mentioned that the Leadership Academy should be more localized, specialized by area, and offer different training for Supervisors who have already attended Level 1 and Level 2 Leadership academy.
- January Leadership Academy in Watford City: There were 12 participants in Level One; 19 in Level Two. They were a really good group. Sarah Tunge presented on DART. There were 7 supervisors at Level One; 6 Supervisors in Level 2. There will be another Leadership Academy in late spring – early June.

## Partner Updates:

- **NDSU Extension:** Carrie Johnson provided a Legislative update.
- **NDCDEA** – Dustin Krueger provided an update on the District annual meeting (DAM - formerly known as Tree Promotion), Outdoor Heritage Fund, a possible Windbreak Technology course, their Mentorship Program and building leaders.
- **Donna Grann:** Donna has been getting phone calls asking why SCDs need to provide their business plans. Jodi stated that it is in the Century Code that the SCDs need to have a plan of work. It also allows the director to see what the districts are doing – their priorities and goals – since Jodi hasn't had a chance to visit all of the districts.
- There is some disconnect between District Managers and Supervisors. Supervisors should be the ones directing the District Manager, but in many districts, the District Manager is the one telling Supervisors what they need to do. Education and outreach are needed between the Employee Association, SSCC and Supervisors.
- What the Century Code states and what is on the SSCC website doesn't exactly match. Carissa will update the site to reflect what the Century Code states.
- **Sarah Tunge** – provided an update on DART. The Dakota Legacy Initiative website is live.
- **USDA-NRCS** –Richard's time as acting State Conservationist is done Friday. Nathan Jones will start as interim for the next 4 months. Discussed staffing and conservation planning training.
- **NDASCD** – Rhonda Kelsch provided some legislative updates. They will be hosting the National Association of Conservation Districts summer meeting in July in Bismarck.
- **ND Game and Fish Dept** – Kevin Kading provided handouts. See Exhibit A.
- **ND Forest Service** – Thomas Claeys discussed the Emerald Ash Borer detected in Moorhead, MN, the Outdoor Heritage Fund and some legislative updates.
- **ND DEQ** - Emilee Lachenmeier discussed grant funding and new projects in the pipeline as well as some upcoming educational opportunities
- **ND Dept of Water Resources** – Matt Lindsay provided a legislative update. Also discussed requests for some databases and talked about push and remote sensors.
- **ND Dept of Agriculture** – no representation

**Approval of minutes from January 3, 2023 Meeting:**

Donna Grann motioned to approve; David Hill seconded. Motion carried.

**Old Business:**

The board wants to thank Barton Schott for his years of service on the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee and award him a gift card. Barton was unable to attend the meeting; however, he will be at the next meeting. Donna to mail the gift card to Jodi to keep until the next meeting.

**New Business:**

- 2023 Governor appointees: Kelly Klosterman and Anthony Mock
- SSCC Financials – have \$11,319.09 remaining after paying Ag Coalition and Mercer County for DART updates. Jodi needs to submit her budget by April 1. Let Jodi know if there are any upcoming expenses you are aware of that will be coming in the next year as soon as possible.
- Committee Tablet Usage – Do we want to use the tablets and how so? We have enough for everyone on the board. Some board members have them already. Tabled for next meeting. Donna suggested having a Drop Box or a Google Drive to keep all of the board information. Carissa will send a reminder for the board to bring tablets to next meeting.
- Legislative Updates – Carrie and Rhonda already covered these
- Employee Healthcare – NDPHIT is meeting march 22<sup>nd</sup>. Need at least two employees to use NDPHIT. If we can get supervisors on the health insurance plan, maybe that will help get more supervisors. Some districts are grandfathered in to other insurance plans. More than half of the districts don't offer insurance. Because of Obamacare, many districts alone don't qualify for health insurance. Hard to be competitive to hire people without benefits. PERS is not an option.
- Rhonda appreciated Kelly Klosterman's help on the back end of things
- Keep Mouse River on the radar
- Send warning to SCDs that we may withhold DART money if they don't follow procedures? We need to create and implement a standard policy when SCDs get behind on their reporting. Tabled for next meeting.

**Next Committee Meeting:**

Early may right away in the morning via Zoom

**Adjournment:**

Wes Frederick motioned to adjourn; Donna Grann seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.