

MINUTES

For the regular meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board

Tuesday, December 9th, 2025, 5:00 pm, located at MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham

**Call to order:** Chairman Bunce called the meeting to order at 5:03pm

**Board members present:** Rowan Bunce, Hillary Ludecke, James DeDecker and Charlie Todd

**Associate board members present:** Barb Isom

**Board members absent:** Hans Eriksen; **Associate board members absent:** None

**Staff present:** Alex Kolton, Misa Cady and Elise Desjarlais

**Staff absent:** Eryn Grupido, Helena Moleski, Landen Tetil, Holly Wendrick-Moss and Sara Kelso

**Guests:** None

**Public comment:** DeDecker shared that he will be stepping down from his ACD Director role once a replacement has been identified in order to pursue other interests. He expressed his confidence in ACD's future and desire to continue his partnership with ACD individually and as a representative of MSU-UPREC.

Kolton shared save-the-date notices regarding the ACD Annual Meeting and Tree Sale

**Correspondence:** Kolton passed around correspondence received since the last regular meeting.

**Approve agenda:** Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Ludecke, to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor; motion carried.

**Approve minutes of November 10th, 2025, regular meeting:** Motion by Todd, seconded by Bunce, to approve the minutes of November 10th, 2025. All in favor; motion carried.

**Board and Staff Reports: review written reports**

**NRCS SC:** Received

Cady highlighted the EQIP designed to address plant resource concerns in Alger Co. She described the process of planning, specing and approving EQIP contracts, and shared local examples of active high tunnel/ cover crop and forest management plan contracts.

**FAP FORESTER:** Received

**L2L CISMA:** Received

Desjarlais reported that the CISMA field season wrapped-up as of Oct 1. Their team had to vacate their offices during the federal government shutdown, but kept working. The MI Invasive Species grant program saw a \$1.6M budget reduction from \$3.6M historically, and this program covers both core operations and special project for the CISMA. The CISMA is anticipating a 30% reduction in available grants for 2026. Federal contracts were made early in the year, but have yet to be finalized. Changes to CISMA funding area also impacting Marquette CD.

**ACD DD (AK):** Received

**ACD DM (EG):** Received

**ACD DC (HM):** Received

**MDARD:** Received

**MAEAP:** Received

**PRODUCE SAFETY:** Received

**Meeting Reports:** DeDecker reported that MSUE will be seeking a millage renewal in 2026. A strong campaign is needed given recent millage results locally and elsewhere for MSUE. DeDecker will keep the Board informed of the "Friends of Extension" advocacy committee's activities and opportunities for involvement. Kolton will refer to a MDARD millage expert he is aware of.

**Old Business:**

- a. Continued, Liability Insurance  
Kolton shared updated info on insurance options available to ACD, including Employment Practices, Cyber, Directors and Officers Liability, and Terrorism policies. The Board discussed the relative value of each policy. Motion by Ludecke, seconded by Todd, to accept the Employment Practices policy from Fischer Insurance and reject the other coverages. All in favor; motion carried.
- b. Damaged Culvert, City of Munising, 1977 partner project  
Kolton reported that he was approached by the City of Munising regarding a damaged culvert that was originally installed as part of an ACD and NRCS project. A question remains regarding who owns the culvert and is responsible for maintenance. According to Cady, the associated landowner is responsible for maintenance. ACD and NRCS are not liable, but can help identify resources, though NRCS funding cannot go to municipalities or schools. MDARD grants might be an option.
- c. Mileage Policy Review  
Kolton share an updated staff mileage reimbursement policy. Discussion ensued. DeDecker suggested adding an explicit timeline for staff reporting moving violations to ACD. Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Todd, to accept the updated policy as amended. All in favor; motion carried.
- d. Community Promo update, Altran  
Kolton reported that no requests have been received for ACD funded rides to food distribution sites, despite lots of advertisement.
- e. QuickBooks Migration  
Kolton reported that ACD is in the process of migrating to QuickBooks online. Initial migration is complete and SOME CPA is reviewing the accounts. Payroll will now be direct deposit, relieving the signature burden. Payroll reports will now be in monthly Board packets. Account signatories will now have QuickBooks access. Kolton is reviewing new state guidelines for accounting practices and checking compliance.
- f. Truck Underbody Winterization  
Kolton received quotes for winterization of the ACD truck ranging from \$400 to \$1,100. The Board declined given the age of the vehicle and assuming it will be replaced in 1-3 years.

**New Business:**

- a. 2026 Board Elections – DeDecker & Todd, nomination due January 9<sup>th</sup>  
The Board discussed potential replacements for DeDecker and ranked them in priority order. Kolton will contact those individuals to gauge their interest. DeDecker and Todd will complete their nomination forms in the meantime.
- b. CNA Review  
Kolton presented current results of ACD's Conservation Needs Assessment with 240 total responses, which is a 2.7% response rate for Alger Co. residents. Discussion focused on overall trends in the data and ways to refine the survey for next round. The current survey closes at the end of ACD's spring tree sale.
- c. Hard Copy to Electronic Files  
Kolton reported that all ACD files have been converted to electronic formats to improve recordkeeping and efficiency, and that current hard-copy files are being converted to the District Google Workspace drive.

**Accept Treasury Report; pay bills**

Kolton presented ACD financial statements as of November 30, 2025. Some line items are not fully updated due to the ongoing QuickBooks migration. Motion by Todd, seconded by Ludecke, to accept the financial statements and pay bills. All in favor; motion carried.

**Public comment**

Desjarlais asked for clarification regarding recent ACD staffing changes. Kolton responded that Grupido and Moleski were promoted with Board approval to reflect their current roles and responsibilities while also addressing training, redundancy and succession planning needs for ACD.

**Adjourn**

Motion by Tod, seconded by Ludecke, to adjourn at 7:29pm. All in favor; motion carried.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, January 13th at 5:00 pm**

**Submitted by James Dedecker | Minutes are subject to approval until signed below**

APPROVED: MM

DATE: 01/13/2026

Rowan Bunce, Chairman      OR      Hilary Ludecke, Vice President