

Meeting Minutes
For the regular meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board
Tuesday, March 4th, 2025, 5:00 pm * MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham

Call to order: On the above date, Chairperson John Highlen called the ACD's regular meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Board members present: James DeDecker, John Highlen, Rowan Bunce, Hilary Ludecke

Board members absent: Hans Eriksen

Associate board members present: Barb Isom and Charlie Todd

Associate board members absent: None

Staff present: Alex Kolton, Eryn Grupido, Misa Cady.

Staff absent: Olivia Engelhardt, Elise Desjarlais, Amy Frye, Landen Tetil, Sara Kelso, and Holly Wendrick-Moss.

Guests: Marty Ludecke

Public comment: Isom related that Falling Rock of Munising has affordable venue rental space if we plan to have small events or workshops in the future.

Correspondence: None

Approve agenda:

Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Ludecke to approve the agenda. All in favor; motion carried.

Approve minutes of February 11th, 2025, regular meeting:

Motion by Ludecke, seconded by DeDecker to approve previous minutes with an amendment to the closing public comment's final sentence to remove "that redefined DHIPI" and "the change to the program" and replace the latter with "deer habitat management". All in favor; motion carried.

Board and Staff Reports: review written reports

Written reports were reviewed by the board and highlighted by staff.

a. NRCS SC: Report Received

Cady went into greater detail on the competitiveness of the EQIP ACT NOW program and the contracts that made it through the process and the ones that were moved to the EQIP Classic program. Announced the CSP Classic was open for applications in February and they are working on 16 of them at the moment. Highlighted a cedar waxwing sighting near the township building in Marquette.

b. FAP FORESTER: Report Received

c. PRODUCE SAFETY: Report Received

d. L2L CISMA: Report Received

e. ACD DD: Report Received

f. ACD DC: Report Received

Grupido announced that the Clean Boats Clean Waters grant application and the MiCorps Stream Monitoring Maintenance Grant have both been awarded to begin this spring and they are just waiting on the contracts now. Updated that the MiCorps Stream Monitoring is only for spring monitoring and will also cover water quality testing at one site. Highlight of the month was passing the Pesticide Licensing Certification Exam.

g. MDARD: Report Received

h. MAEAP: Report Received

Meeting Reports:

Kolton reported on attendance at the Trenary Lions Club meeting to establish community gardens. They are currently seeking volunteers and funding, with \$500 provided by the Lions Club and an additional \$500 provided by the Regional Lions Club for a total budget of \$1000. Kolton has offered the districts assistance in engaging the community, Bunce has offered starts, and DeDecker has offered compost from the farm. DeDecker and Highlen reported attending the AuTrain-Onota Township meeting. DeDecker plans to attend more and mentioned the topic of blight did come up. Highlen announced that the township will continue to sponsor the Tyoga Pathway camping sites and is finalizing details with the DNR. Bunce reported that Rock River Township has determined they will continue to fund the Chatham Ski Hill through its current lease with Hiawatha but are seeking other groups to take over. If none continue to manage the hill after that time period, it will need to be reverted back to its natural state per the agreement. Discussion ensued on how we could help if that comes but that there is a group working towards taking over.

Old Business:

a. Annual Meeting: Overview

Kolton reported that several partners have agreed to present at the annual meeting so far and walked through the general timeline of events the day of. DeDecker stated they would be able to present on stream monitoring and Agripalooza. Cady RSVP'd no for the NRCS staff as they have other commitments that day.

b. Policy Review: Sick Leave Policy Review

The Sick Leave Policy was presented with the approved edits from last month's meeting to align the policy with the Michigan Earned Sick Time Act. Discussion followed surrounding whether to amend again to pay out employees that leave or to continue holding unused sick leave in case of their return. Payout of sick leave was not found as desired, and the board opted to track and accrue unused sick leave required by the new Michigan Sick Time Act as the preferred method of accounting. DeDecker recommended clarifying the part time and seasonal earning rate to include "at a rate of x" after the amount per year. Grupido pointed out miscellaneous parentheses and to ensure the Earned Sick Time Act title is the same throughout the policy. Kolton will amend and present next month for any other changes.

c. Tree Sale Printing

Kolton updated that the mailers ordered through the new printer were sent out to every address within Alger County and opened discussion on what to do with the late received mailers from the first printer with the recommendation to spend \$1350 to cover the printer's cost of printing and send them out at the end of the month but only if the current ones have made 3% of sales at that time. Kolton reported the sales trends.

Motion to approve the spend of \$1350 to cover printers cost only if the 3% sales goal has been met by the end of the month by DeDecker, Seconded by Bunce. All in favor; the motion carried.

New Business:

a. SOP: Employee Safety, Manager Protocol

Kolton presented a standard operating procedure that would act as a staff and manager guide alongside the Substance Abuse Policy guidelines. Discussion confirmed to keep impairments general and simplified for all staff. It was recommended to add "Board Liaison" after "Board Chair" in the directions of who to contact, to confirm searches are allowable, and to add a statement explaining what will occur if the impaired employee refuses to comply with district policy and procedures.

b. Stream Monitoring

Grupido reiterated that the MiCorps Maintenance Grant was awarded for this spring's stream monitoring and that Dexter and Scott Creek were chosen. Dexter as a reapproach from previous years monitoring and Scott because of the potential septic leak Mathias Township has reported. Water sampling will be performed during stream monitoring to confirm whether there is a leak. Upstream and downstream invertebrate samples will be taken at each.

Accept Treasury Report; pay bills

Kolton presented ACD financial statements as of March 4th, 2025. The board reviewed the report.

Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Bunce, to accept the Treasury Reports and pay the bills as presented. All in favor; motion carried.

Public comment

DeDecker announced that next Tuesday's Ag for Tomorrow conference looks well attended and that it is open for the district to have a table if anyone would like to attend it. The table would be free, but attending sessions and lunch would be \$30.

Adjourn

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke, to adjourn at 6:26 pm. All in favor; motion carried.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday April 8th, 2025, 5:00 pm

Grupido has transcribed these minutes.

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

APPROVED: _____



John Highlen, Chairman

DATE: _____

4/8/25

OR

Rowan Bunce, Vice President