

## MINUTES

For the regular meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board  
Tuesday, February 10th, 2026, 5:00 pm, located at MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham

**Call to order:** Chairman Bunce called the meeting to order at 4:55pm

**Board members present:** Rowan Bunce, Charlie Todd, Hillary Ludecke, James DeDecker, Barb Isom (associate)

**Board members absent:** Hans Eriksen

**Staff present:** Alex Kolton, Eryn Grupido, Helena Moleski, Misa Cady, Sara Kelso

**Staff absent:** Holly Wendrick-Moss and Elise Desjarlais

**Guests:** Hampton Waring

**Public comment:** Waring congratulated the ACD staff on their social media presence.

Bunce shared that a group of local farmers in applying for a MDARD Regenerative Farmer Network grant and asked for ACD's support.

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

**Approve agenda:** Bunce requested the addition of "New Business Item D: Letter of Support for Regen Farmer Network Grant". Motion by Todd, seconded by Ludecke, to approve the agenda as amended. All in favor; motion carried.

**Approve minutes of January 13th, 2026, regular meeting:** Kolton requested amendments to the DD report striking "again" in the note about using Pride Printing for tree sale; New Business B striking the sentence about ACD being compliant with MDARD/MI legal requirements; New Business D to clarify that bank policy had been that only one signatory was required to open or close ACD accounts and a motion was passed to require a Board vote plus two signatures to open or close accounts going forward, and to the spelling of Hampton (sic Hamilton) Waring's name.

Motion by Ludecke, seconded by Todd, to approve the minutes of January 13th, 2026 as amended. All in favor; motion carried.

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

**NRCS SC:** Received

Cady reported that she has been working on processing cost share payments and preparing for submission of FY26 applications for programs launching soon. She noted 25 EQIP and 25 CSP applications with about 1/3 of those from Alger Co.

**CTAI Conserv:** Received

**FAP FORESTER:** Received

Kelso reported that she is busy planning upcoming outreach programs. Site visits have slowed a bit until spring.

**L2L CISMA:** Received

**ACD DD (AK):** Received

Kolton reported that ordered fruit tree care books were received along with registrations for the companion online pruning course. These resources will be given away to FAP pruning workshop participants. 30 people participated in wilderness first aid training.

**ACD DM (EG):** Received

Grupido reported that she attended the UP CD Managers Retreat to network and learn from others. She has been training with Alex on payroll and other ACD admin duties.

**ACD DC (HM):** Received

Moleski reported that her first two grant proposals were successful, one from friends of NACD for conservation speed dating in Grand Marais and another from Wildflower Assoc of Michigan for flower gardens in Burt Township, Alger Co Courthouse and Superior Central.

**MDARD:** Received

**MAEAP:** Received

**PRODUCE SAFETY:** VACANT

**ABC FORESTER:** Received

### **Meeting Reports:**

#### **Old Business:**

- a. **New Policy Review – Director and Associate Director Recruitment**  
Kolton shared a draft ACD Board recruitment policy based on a Mason-Lake CD template. It outlines target demographics and proposed procedures for recruitment. The draft policy document had some typos/formatting errors, so this issue was tabled until the next meeting.
- b. **Succession Planning (QuickBooks, Data Access)**  
Kolton reported that all Board signatories now have QB access. Kolton reviewed ACD passwords access and recommended that we develop a mechanism to share key passwords with staff and directors. Kolton will draft a list of all ACD passwords for the Board to review access and succession planning. Kolton also recommended that the Board use official MACD email addresses for ACD business for FOIA, security and continuity during transitions/succession.
- c. **T-Shirt Contest (Conservation Art Contest)**  
Kolton congratulated Moleski on executing the contest. Fifteen contestants from ATO and other schools have expressed interest. Voting begins Feb 21 online. Four votes are allowed per IP address, plus in-person at the ACD Annual Meeting. Voting ends at the Annual with sales beginning April 1. Prizes will be offered for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in two categories. Revenue from the shirt sales will go to a conservation field trip experience for the class of the winning student.
- d. **Tree Sale (timeline, vendors and ops update)**  
Kolton reported that tree sale will be open Feb 14 – April 18 with distribution May 9. Public schools, municipalities and farmers were notified of the available 25% discount, and some teachers have responded.
- e. **PT Field Technician Job Posting**  
Kolton reported that ACD budgeted for two seasonal field technicians Tue-Thur, 8-9 hours per day and shared a draft position announcement. DeDecker suggested that Kolton add the term “seasonal” and explicit start and end dates. DeDecker also suggested providing EPA Worker Protection Standard training for seasonal staff working near pesticides and will share the EPA manual.

#### **New Business:**

- a. **Pie Contest (tree sale engagement)**  
Grupido shared a proposal for a pie contest at the tree sale distribution. The program is designed to encourage education, foraging and planting of tree sale related pie ingredients. Entries must use an ingredient available through the tree sale. ~~The winner will receive a \$25 tree sale gift card and a trophy.~~ The Board suggested recruiting assigned judges.
- b. **Date Adjustment, Regular Board Meeting, March 24th**  
Kolton will be out of the office for 1-2 weeks of personal leave. He is preparing Grupido and Moleski to cover Lansing Capital Day and otherwise while he is gone. Motion by Ludecke, seconded by Todd, to move the March regular meeting to March 24<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. All in favor; motion carried.
- c. **Moleski, 6/mo Employee Review**  
The Board went into a closed meeting at 6:20pm, with staff and partners excused. Kolton and Directors discussed and reviewed Moleski’s job performance with her. The Board returned to full session at 6:39pm.
- d. **Letter of Support for Regen Farmer Network Grant**  
Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Ludecke, to provide a letter of support for the Regen Farmer Network grant proposal led by Bunce. All in favor; motion carried.

**Accept Treasury Report; pay bills**

Kolton presented ACD financial statements as of Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 and the current Budget vs Actual for FY26. Kolton shared that he has met with the Americana Foundation President to help improve ACD's grant applications to their organization. Other anticipated grants will likely not come through, totaling a \$90K shortfall in projected grant revenue this FY. Bunce suggested developing a worst-case budget scenario for future planning. The bottom line will still be in the black (positive), despite lost grant revenue. DeDecker asked for clarification regarding persistent duplicate accounting lines for payroll based on QB migration. Motion by Todd, seconded by Ludecke, to approve the financial statements and pay bills. All in favor; motion carried.

**Public comment**

Isom asked for an update on funding for ALTRAN rides to food pantries. There was no update to share, but ACD did receive a donation to help support the program.

DeDecker suggested a more focused timeline for the Conservation Needs Assessment going forward.

Kolton asked for input on available media training resources.

**Adjourn:** Motion by Ludecke, seconded by Todd, to adjourn at 7:09pm. All in favor; motion carried.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** Tuesday, March ~~19th~~ 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm

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

APPROVED:     *WR*    

DATE:     03/24/2026    

Rowan Bunce, Chairman OR Hilary Ludecke, Vice President