- **Minutes of the Pipestone Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting**

August 13th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Pipestone County Government Center Southwest

1016 8th Ave SW Pipestone, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

Brad Kruisselbrink, Chairman
Cal Spronk, Vice-Chair
Ken Christensen, Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Folger, PR&I
Mike Fruechte, Programs

Board Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Kyle Krier, Nicole Schwebach, Kyle Kuphal, Nathan Blankers, Luke Johnson

Chairman Kruisselbrink called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

A. Approve Agenda

Spronk made a motion to approve the August agenda with the addition of letter I. 319 Policy Update. Fruechte seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Spronk to approve the minutes of the July board meeting. Folger seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

C. Financial Report and Approval of Bills

Fruechte made a motion to file the financial reports and approve the payment of bills. Spronk seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

New Business:

D. RCPP Vouchers

No vouchers were submitted for approval.

E. Soil Health Equipment Grant Vouchers

Motion by Christensen to approve the equipment grant vouchers for Merrill, Bauman, and Bolt. Motion seconded by Folger. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

F. Conservationist of the Year

Following discussion motion by Fruechte to nominate Steve and Nathan Pierson as the 2026 Pipestone SWCD Conservation Farmer winner. Seconded by Christensen. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none Motion carried.

G. 2027 Budget

Krier presented the proposed 2027 budget with County allocation being left the same as 2026. The 2026 budget was also discussed and the need to move funds as needed from the Monument SSTS update program to the Soil Health Equipment Grant due to funds being overallocated. It is estimated that there will be a balance of $11,998 remaining in SSTS grant account if all equipment grants are completed. Motion by Spronk to transfer funds as needed from Monument SSTS fund to Soil Health Equipment Grant fund. Seconded by Folger. Affirmative: all Oppose: none Motion carried.

H. Federal Milage Rate

Krier informed board that federal milage rate has been increased to $.76 per mile effective as of July 1, 2026.

I. 319 Policy Update

Schwebach presented a proposed 319 policy update (attached) which includes a non-structural policy for cover crops and strip-till/no-till. Planning to allocate funds toward cover crops for two-year contracts since unable to allocate funding towards pasture practices. Motion by Spronk to approve updated policy, seconded by Fruechte. Affirmative: all Oppose: none Motion carried.

Motion by Christensen to authorize staff to approve contracts as they are submitted to allow for earlier plantings of cover crops, seconded by Spronk. Affirmative: all Oppose: none Motion carried.

Reports:

County Commissioners:

Luke – Last week attended Redwood River Watershed Plan meeting. County is working on budgets.

Supervisor Reports:

Fruechte – Attended Redwood 1W1P meeting money is being allocated fast. $320,000 of $500,000 has been allocated for structural, and $180,000 of $200,000 has been allocated for non-structural.

Spronk – August 21 there is a state resolutions committee meeting that he will be attending to review and comment on proposed resolutions. Next area V meeting will be held in Marshall on September 17th.

Folger – Nothing.

Christensen – Attended Missouri 1W1P meeting on July 16th, approved a couple contracts that were over $50,000 and reviewed the mid contract amendment. Some modifications included reducing some of the targeted reductions and also reducing proposed water retention practices.

Kruisselbrink – turned meeting over to Spronk due to having another appointment, left meeting at 10:15.

NRCS Report: Working on new CSP contracts, also having a few EQIP payments. Attended Arc Pro training in Marshall.

Manager's Report: Krier reported that Schwebach, Bonnett and I attended Farm Bureau Trunk or Treat. Had good attendance. No-till drill has been fixed and is back, main issue was dirt and rocks in chains and gears, they also replaced colters.

Adjournment:
There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Spronk declared the meeting adjourned at 10:30.

Ken Christensen, Secretary

319 Grant - Pipestone, Split Rock, and Mound Creeks Program & Cost Share Policy

August 2026

I. INTRODUCTION:

a. The Pipestone and Rock Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) will use this policy adapted from the Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (MRWCWMP) to prioritize and fund applications for cost share.
b. Three similar small-scale watersheds were selected to be the focus of this grant: Pipestone, Split Rock, and Mound Creek. Each watershed currently does not meet applicable water quality standards.
c. The SWCD will abide by these guidelines and hereby establish these Policies.

II. PRIORITY

a. The SWCD will use the priorities set by the MRWP to rank applications for contract funding. The MRWP have set priorities to better meet the goals of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The amount of priorities met shall be totaled for each project and compared to others to determine which is/are funded. The priorities are as follows:
    i. Project listed in Section 2, Table 2-1 for Priority Concern #1 in the Missouri River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan 2019-2028 document.
    ii. Project is within a priority sub watershed
    iii. Proximity of the project to surface water and lakes of significance.
    iv. Project is in a wellhead protection area.
    v. Project has applied for and been denied for other funding sources.
    vi. Project provides benefits to multiple concerns.
    vii. Project is near and will provide benefits to impaired surface water.
    viii. Project is supported by PTMapp results.
    ix. Project/practice type allows for the calculation of pollution reductions and the reduction estimations show a decrease of those pollutants.
    x. Project affects one of the lakes of significance identified in the 1W1P document.
b. The list of priorities here is not exhaustive. Priority ranking is based from the approved Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Ranking sheets and point values assigned may change with recommendations from the planning groups.
c. Applications for a project may only be considered if the project falls within the Pipestone Creek, Split Rock Creek, or Mound Creek Watersheds within the boundary of Minnesota.

III. COST SHARE FUNDS

a. Any Landowner or operator who is non-compliant with the state or federal conservation laws are ineligible to receive any watershed-based implementation funds.

    i. Examples; state buffer law, WCA, etc.…
b. The local SWCDs will start the cost share contract and complete the ranking.
c. Utilizing state and non-state funds for a project will be considered on a case-by-case basis by SWCD staff. If a contract is approved as such, payment amounts from combined state and non-state sources shall not exceed the maximum cost share rate of 100%.
d. The minimum amount (per contract) of state cost share to be approved for a non-structural practice is $1,000.00, unless amount left to encumber is less. The maximum amount of cost share for a non-structural practice is $30,000.00 unless otherwise approved by the Pipestone SWCD.
e. Cover Crops as a secondary practice single or multi- species in conjunction with a structural practice will have a contract maximum of $3500.00.
f. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) rates for non-structural practices will be considered when applicable.
g. Structural contracts will have a cost share maximum of $50,000 unless otherwise approved by the Pipestone SWCD. There will not be a minimum amount.
h. Non-farmable terraces will be cost shared up to 90% of the estimated cost of project. Estimates based on TSA county averages.
i. Farmable terraces are allowed but will only be cost shared up to 65% of the estimated cost of the project. Estimates based on TSA county averages.
j. The allowable distance for a tile outlet is up to 3000 feet from the end of treatment. Any tile beyond that length will be paid by the cooperator. Cost share funds will be used for the actual diameter of tile needed for the project, and not the diameter desired by the cooperator. Tile length allowable shall be determined by acres treated.
k. Payment for conservation use acres will be $150 per acre up to 10 acres, when combined with a structural practice. These funds cannot be doubled up.
l. The local SWCD from the county the practice is implemented in will be responsible for the operation and maintenance (O&M) inspections.

IV. PERCENTAGE RATES

a. The maximum cost share rate utilizing watershed-based funds for installation of a practice is one hundred percent (100%) of the installation cost. State and non-state funds combined may not exceed 100%.
    i. Any project that utilizes more than (90%) watershed-based funds needs approval from the Pipestone SWCD.
b. Practices in the High and Medium-High priority sub watersheds within the MRWCWMP planning boundary will be eligible to be cost shared at 90%. Farmable terraces will be eligible to be cost shared at 65%. Practices outside of the priority sub watersheds within the MRWCWMP planning boundary, will be eligible to be cost shared at 75%. Farmable terraces will be eligible for cost share up to 55%.

c. Cost share will not be calculated to include permit costs.
d. Percentage rates will only apply to structural practices.
    i. Land occupiers must incur all expenses for project implementation and provide invoices or copies of paid receipts to verify all expense prior to requesting reimbursement and must sign a voucher.
e. Nonstructural Land Management Practices (NLMP) will be paid with a flat rate set forth by the MRWP with recommendations from the PWG.

V. FLAT RATE COST SHARE

a. Flat rates will be used as an alternative to actual costs documented by receipts or invoices.
b. Land enrolled in USDA's EQIP for like incentives will not be eligible.
c. A one- or two-year contract length will be allowed provided there is enough time to complete and certify the practice before the grant deadline of August 31, 2028.
d. The land occupier will be paid annually after the practice has been installed and certified completed by the technical representative with appropriate Job Approval Authority.
e. The rates and general requirements for Nonstructural Land Management Practices are as follows:
    i. References to "traditional" "General EQIP" payment rates can be found in the most recent published installment of current EQIP Contracting Guidance Document and/or current EQIP cost list – payment schedule
    ii. Cover Crops
        1. Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340.
        2. No tillage, with the exception of strip till and manure application, is allowed on planted acres until a reasonable beginning date of spring tillage.
        3. Grazing by livestock is permitted any time it does not affect the initial development of plants.
        4. Annual installation of cover crop.
            a. One species
            b. The MRWP will set payment rate at the first meeting of each funding cycle and will consider most recent "traditional" "General EQIP" payment rate for "Cover Crop - Basic and organic/non-organic." The current Cost Share rate is $40.00 per acre
                i. The above rate will be paid per acre for a minimum of following standard recommendations for establishment of a single cover crop.
                ii. EXAMPLE: "1 year of Cereal Rye on 40 acres" "40 x $40.00= $1,600.00."
            c. Multiple species (two or more)
                i. The MRWP will set payment rate at the first meeting of each funding cycle and will consider most recent "traditional" "General EQIP" payment rate for "Cover Crop Multiple Species Organic and Non-Organic." The current Cost Share rate is $60.00 per acre.

ii. The above rate will be paid per acre for a minimum of following standard recommendations for establishment of a multiple species cover crop rotation.
iii. EXAMPLE: “1 year of Cereal Rye, Turnips, and Tillage Radish on 40 acres” “40 x $60.00= $2,400.”

iii. Residue and Tillage Management
1. Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 for “No-Till/Strip-Till.”
2. One year implementation of practice.
a. The MRWP will set payment rate at the first meeting of each funding cycle and will consider most recent “traditional” “General EQIP” payment rate for “Residue and Tillage Management 329” “No-Till/Strip Till.” The current Cost Share rate is $30.00 per acre.
i. The above rate will be paid per acre for implementing “No-Till/Strip-Till”
ii. EXAMPLE: “1 year of No-Till/Strip-Till on 40 acres” “40 x $30= $1,200.00.”

iv. Wellhead Nitrogen Management
1. Must follow University of Minnesota Nitrogen recommendations
2. If mandated to follow the MN 7020 rules, can not apply for this funding.
3. No fall nitrogen source application
a. Split application
i. No more than 50% of the recommended nitrogen can be applied prior to planting.
ii. $20.00/acre
b. Precision Ag
i. Any method utilizing technology to apply nitrogen to ensure profitability, sustainability and environmental protection
ii. $30.00/acre

v. Conservation Use
1. The MRWP will set payment rate at the first meeting of each funding cycle.
2. If receiving funds from another source for conservation use acres, funds from the 319 grant may not be used.
a. The payment rate is set at $150 per acre, not to exceed $1500 in total for one of the following practices.
i. Allow the construction of terraces and the appurtenant tiling in the spring before crops are planted. Payment will be only for those acres that are adversely affected by soil compaction in the construction process.
ii. plant small grain in the area where terraces and appurtenant tiling are scheduled to be constructed. Payment will be only for those acres where actual construction is planned.

iii. Payment will be made in the spring after planting has been done and verified.

VI. TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

a. Technical services will be provided by local SWCD staff with appropriate job approval authority; conservation partners with appropriate job approval authority (such as: Natural Resources Conservation Service and/or Southwest Prairie Technical Service Area); a professional licensed engineer, and/or reputable vendor with applicable expertise and liability coverage.

VII. PRACTICE STANDARDS

a. All practices must be consistent with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Minnesota Stormwater Manual, or be professionally accepted engineering or ecological practices. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the effective life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure.

VIII. CONTRACT NONCOMPLIANCE

a. The District, after learning of potential non-compliance, will:
    i. Review applicable law and rule.
    ii. Review project file contents, contract and O&M plan.
    iii. Have the local SWCD conduct on-site investigation, including pictures and a complete site inspection form, if this has not already been done.
    iv. Interview the land occupier.
    v. If determined that land occupier is in compliance, the District staff will document this decision and no corrective action is needed.
    vi. If determined that land occupier is not in compliance, the District staff will present to the District Board of Supervisors their findings and corrective action plan.
    vii. If the District Board of Supervisors agrees that a non-compliance condition exists, a corrective action plan will be completed and sent via registered mail to the land occupier and a copy will be sent to the local SWCD that is responsible for oversight of the installed practice. The corrective action plan will make reference as to why the practice is not in compliance; specify what the land occupier must do to correct the situation and give deadlines for corrective action to be completed.
    viii. If the District Board doesn't agree that a non-compliance condition exists, then it will be documented, and no corrective action plan is needed.
    ix. The local SWCD staff will follow up to make sure land occupier completes corrective action in the time allotted and the SWCD staff will follow up with the District.
    x. If land occupier fails to implement the corrective action plan, the land occupier will be considered in a "violation" status.
b. If the land occupier fails to maintain the practice during the practice duration, they will be liable to the MRWP for up to 150% of the payment received for the practice. These dollars will be returned to the General budget and the MRWP will use them accordingly.

IX. OTHER POLICIES APPLICABLE TO THE PROGRAM

a. **Cost Share Contract:** A contract between the District and land occupier receiving state funds is required to provide a legal standing to ensure practices are installed and maintained according to approved standards and specifications. The District must approve or deny the contract. The land occupier must not start construction of the practice until the District approves the cost share contract. If construction starts prior to approval the land occupier will not be eligible for Watershed Based Implementation Funding cost share funds.
b. **Contract Approval:** The District Board will approve or deny the contract. The action taken will be documented in the District's meeting minutes and notification of the decision will be sent to the land occupier. Approval of contract is considered approval for expenditure of funds. The District Board delegates signing contracts and supporting program documents to the District Board Chairperson and/or the District Manager.
c. **Contract Amendment:** Changes to an executed contract are considered an amendment to the contract and subject to review and approval by the District Board. Prior to approving an amendment, technical staff must attest that the amendment has merit. Amendments shall not be considered or approved after the end of the contract or after approval to issue final payment on the original contract has been made. Amendments are limited to changes in practice specifications, installation dates, land occupier information, practice components, or cost share amounts.
d. **Partial Payments:** The District may consider allowing partial payments. The partial payment requests will be reviewed on an individual basis. Land occupiers not completing partially paid projects shall be considered violation of state statute and shall be directed, unless otherwise authorized by the state board, to return one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the amount of financial assistance received.

APPROVED BY THE PIPESTONE SWCD BOARD ON AUGUST 13, 2026.