

- **Minutes of the Pipestone Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting**
January 16th, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
Pipestone County Government Center Southwest
1016 8th Ave SW Pipestone, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present:

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

Chairman Christensen called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Oath of Office for Newly Elected Supervisors: Cal Spronk, Ken Christensen and Mike Fruechte.

A. Approve Agenda

Kruisselbrink made a motion to approve the January agenda as presented. Spronk seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

Spronk made a motion to approve the election of officers as shown above. Fruechte seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

Chairman Folger took over meeting.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Christensen, seconded by Spronk to approve the minutes of the December board meeting with approved changes. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

C. Financial Report and Approval of Bills

Christensen 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:

G. Committee Assignments

- a. Christensen made a motion to approve the committee assignments as shown on the attached sheet to the minutes, Fruechte as alternate for Redwood 1W1P. Spronk seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

H. Policy Review

- a. Spronk made a motion to approve the policy changes, final policy is attached.
 - i. Meal allowance up to \$50/day to cover meal, tax & delivery fee with max gratuity of 20%
 - ii. Approval to pay SWCD supervisors \$50/day for meetings held remotely
 - iii. SSTS Program income limits will be based on 300% Federal Poverty Guidelines.
 - iv. Tree program discount amount changed from 25% to 20%.

Kruisselbrink seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

I. Programs and Funding Priorities

- a. Discussion on program and funding priorities of the district. The Board supported putting money towards the Monument SSTS update program again this year. Krier suggested waiting until 2023 audit is presented before final decision of SWCD aid fund allocations.

J. Cost Share Vouchers

- a. Krier presented a voucher for Huiskens Farms to help fund control drainage system. Contract #Huiskens-24 in the amount of \$5,000.00 paid out of 2024 NRBG LWM funds. Spronk made a motion to approve the voucher. Christensen seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.
- b. Krier presented a contract for Seth Christensen to cover the payment of 7 acres with cover crop and strip till practices for \$2,520.00 paid out of 2024 NRBG LWM funds. Supervisor Christensen abstained from voting. Spronk made a motion to approve the voucher. Kruisselbrink seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

K. Employee Review

- a. Schwebach agreed to keep the meeting open during her review. Krier presented her review to the board stating that her review was favorable with a work anniversary date of 1-13-25. Christensen made a motion to approve the review. Kruisselbrink seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

Reports:

County Commissioner Report:

Johnson – nothing

Supervisor Reports:

Fruechte – Will be doing financial report to state, all SWCD supervisors are required to do.

Spronk – Has taken over as Area V Treasurer, attended TSA meeting via zoom, all is going

well.

Christensen – Making the switch to strip till and has begun starting to sell some of his old tillage equipment.

Kruisselbrink – Work continues with Redwood 1W1P policy but was unable to attend the last meeting.

Folger – nothing.

NRCS Report: Ranking EQIP applications, met with Pipestone National Monument on programs and water quality. NRCS employee Patrick Toomey is now in the Lakefield office.

Manager's Report: Krier presented a request for leave without pay for employee Shannon Bootsma. The Board discussed and did not support staff taking leave without pay. Spronk made a motion to conditionally approve leave without pay for Bootsma, pending action by the personnel committee. Fruechte seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

Adjournment:

There being no further business Chairman Folger declared the meeting adjourned at 11:22.

Cal Spronk, Secretary

2025 SWCD Board Positions & Committee's

Officers

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

SWCD Committees

Personnel	Bill Folger Brad Kruisselbrink
Conservation & Zoning Liaison	Luke Johnson, County Commissioner Doug Nagel, County Commissioner Bill Folger Brad Kruisselbrink
RCRCA	Primary: Brad Kruisselbrink Alternate: Ken Christensen
Missouri River 1W1P	Primary: Ken Christensen Alternate: Brad Kruisselbrink
S.W. Prairie T.S.A.	Primary: Cal Spronk Alternate: Bill Folger
Redwood 1W1P	Primary: Brad Kruisselbrink Alternative: Mike Fruechte

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES 2025

The following policies are hereby adopted and effective as of January 16th, 2025.

BOARD

Mission: To Promote Conservation of Natural Resources through Education, Technical Assistance and Stewardship

Committees: The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve on the Personnel and Environmental Liaison Committees.

ADMINISTRATIVE/PERSONEL

Insurance: A Minnesota Public Employees Insurance Program HSA single/family plan will be offered to all full-time employees. At a minimum all full time staff must be covered under the Single Health insurance plan that is offered. A \$650 single and \$1,075.00 family health insurance contribution will be provided to all eligible staff. Term life Insurance will be provided to all eligible employees at a coverage rate of \$25,000. Single or family dental insurance coverage is optional to eligible employees, costs for dental will be taken out of the monthly capped amount or deducted from the employee's wages. The employee will be responsible for any costs that may exceed the monthly capped amount. Capped funds provided that exceed the cost of Health and Dental Insurance are required to be put in an employee HSA account.

Board Supervisor Compensation: A supervisor shall receive compensation of \$50/day for each regular board meeting, other meetings held within Pipestone County, or remote meetings. Supervisors who attend meetings outside of Pipestone County or all-day meetings will receive a compensation of \$125/day and may be reimbursed for expenses, including traveling expenses. A supervisor may also be reimbursed for the use of the supervisor's own automobile in the performance of official duties at a rate up to the maximum tax-deductible mileage rate permitted under the federal Internal Revenue Code. Maximum Per diem rate is \$125/day.

Authorized Representative: The SWCD Board of Supervisors hereby designates the Office Administrator, Kyle Krier, as the authorized representative of Clean Water Grants, Conservation Delivery, Easement Delivery MPCA SSTS, and other grants.

Data Practices Representative:

Pipestone SWCD Board of supervisors hereby appoints the Office Administrator, Kyle Krier, as the authorized data practices representative.

Bank CD's/ Signature Cards: The SWCD Administrator and Administrative Assistant shall be the authorized SWCD financial supervisors with authority to sign savings, CD's, and all other pertinent financial records. All SWCD staff are authorized to sign checks and all staff and district supervisors are authorized to use credit card.

Employee Credit Cards: On November 10, 2016 Calvin Spronk made a motion to allow all SWCD staff to have a credit card with a limit of \$1500 each and to cancel the SWCD Generic Card. Anna Mae Fritz seconded the motion. Affirmative: all. Oppose: none. Motion carried.

Accounting: Meulebroeck, Taubert & Co shall be the SWCD's designated accountant to perform required financial audit's which is due December 31st of each year. Kinner and Company will be the designated accountant to assist and oversee bank reconciliations and taxes.

Mileage Rate: The SWCD will utilize the Federal IRS mileage rate.

Meal Allowance: The SWCD allows up to \$50 per day meal allowance to cover meals, tax and delivery fees. A maximum gratuity of up to 20% may be added to the cost of each meal.

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES

2025

Conservation Reserve program:

All SWCD Staff are hereby authorized to sign the Conservation Reserve Program Conservation Plans on behalf of the Pipestone SWCD Board.

Tree COOLER: Pipestone Soil and Water do hereby agree to allow Pipestone County Emergency Management whereby the SWCD tree cooler be available in the event of a mass human fatality for use as temporary morgue. August 14, 2014

Cell phones stipend: 12-11-14 Motion to compensate each staff member that has a personal cell phone and utilizes that phone for work related purposes \$35 per month beginning January 1, 2015.

Clothing Allowance: SWCD Staff and Board members will be allotted up to \$150 every 2 years for clothing purchases printed or embroidered with the SWCD Logo. (ex. 1/1/2017-12/31/2018, 1/1/2019-12/31/2020)

COST-SHARE PROGRAM POLICIES

Percentage Rates

Conservation Practices

Practice priority: Pipestone SWCD establishes that Conservation Practices which address erosion control shall rank highest in prioritization of cost-share funds, consideration will also be given to those projects which have the greatest reductions with the least costs.

Cost-share rates: Cost-share of conservation practices shall not exceed a maximum of 90% within High to Medium-High watershed and shall not exceed 75% within Medium to Low priority watersheds, unless funds are being used to repair practices after a natural disaster in which payment may be up to 100% of repair costs.

- Farmable terraces are allowed but will only be cost shared up to 90% of the estimated cost of a non-Farmable. Estimates based on TSA county averages.
- 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.

Pre-Construction Cover incentive: Pipestone SWCD will offer producers who have cost-shared erosion control projects on crop land an incentive payment of \$150 per acre if area is planted to an early harvestable crop or destroy crop to allow for an expanded construction season. Maximum payment of \$1,500.

Non-Structural Flat Rate

Cover Crops

Flat rates will be used as an alternative to actual costs documented by receipts or invoices. Priority will be given to producers who have not previously installed cover crops and who are not enrolled in other incentive programs.

Cover Crops: Installation of cover crops must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340. The District will enter into one contract with each individual land occupier for 3 years of the practice. No tillage, with the exception of strip till and manure application, is allowed on planted acres until a reasonable beginning date of spring planting. Grazing by livestock is permitted any time it does not affect the initial development of plants.

Rotation of Cover Crops: Cover crops may be rotated within or to adjoining fields to allow cover crops to be planted on a specific crop provided acres are the same.

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES

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Flat rate payments: A flat rate of \$40 per acre per year for single species, \$60 per acre per year for multi-species will be paid in a one lump-sum payment after the initial year of installation and certified complete by the technical representative. The remaining years of the practice will be completed under the O&M plan and inspected annually by a technical representative. If the non-structural practice was installed but failed to establish for reasons beyond the land occupier's control, the land occupier will be paid for the year. If the non-structural practice was not installed due to reasons outside the land occupier's control, an additional year will be added to the contract to ensure the initial practice lifespan is met. The maximum contract payment amount shall not exceed \$28,000.

Strip-till or no-till

Strip-till, no-till: Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till. The District will enter into one contract with each individual land occupier for 3 years of the practice. No full-width soil disturbance may be performed from the time following harvest or termination of one cash crop through harvest or termination of the next cash crop in the rotation

Flat rate payments: A flat rate of \$30 per acre per year will be paid in a one lump-sum payment after the initial year of installation and certified complete by the technical representative. The remaining years of the practice will be completed under the O&M plan and inspected annually by a technical representative. If the non-structural practice was installed but failed to establish for reasons beyond the land occupier's control, the land occupier will be paid for the year. If the non-structural practice was not installed due to reasons outside the land occupier's control, an additional year will be added to the contract to ensure the initial practice lifespan is met. The maximum contract payment amount shall not exceed \$14,000.

*** Cost-share rates and policies will apply County wide and will be based on the active Missouri River Watershed Partnership Policy at time of application. Area's without High to Low watershed priority designations will receive a maximum cost-share rate of 75%.*

AG BMP PROGRAM

Eligibility: All loan applications must be received prior to project completion or equipment purchase. Tillage, Tractors, Skid loaders, Pay loaders, and all other questionable equipment loans require board approval.

Loan Limits: The maximum loan amount shall be \$200,000 without board approval.

TREE PROGRAM

Replacement policy:

- Only trees planted by SWCD may be replaced.
- Original replacement sizes not guaranteed.
- Trees will not be replaced where site conditions were poor and there was no effort to properly ensure root to soil contact.
- Trees will not be replaced due to extreme weather conditions, rodents, wildlife, or negligence.
- Trees will only be replaced within 1yr of the planting date and at a 50% discount rate from the retail price of the tree.

Demolition: SWCD will contribute up to 100% but not to exceed \$500 per acre for tree removal provided new trees are planted where they were removed.

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES 2025

Incentive Payment: A 20% incentive payment may be applied on tree sites that have a SWCD developed tree plan and also utilize the SWCD planting and/or matting services. This incentive payment may only be applied on trees planted within Pipestone County.

WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

WCA Resolution #1-2008, 10/2/2008:

The Board of Supervisors delegates that decision authority for exemption, no loss, wetland boundary and type, replacement plan, sequencing determination, and wetland banking determination are placed with the Office Administrator, Kyle Krier.

SSTS PROGRAM

Grants: Applicants must authorize the release of their 10-40 tax document to the Pipestone County Soil and Water Conservation District for the purpose of determining the adjusted gross income for a grant on a septic system. The approval of this grant is based on the conditions that the adjusted gross income of the property owner/owners, is equal to or less than the low or very low income level for the number of persons being claimed on the applicant's tax statements as shown below. Other requirements include that the owner/owners reside in the residence and do not transfer the land within 5 years. Grant dollars will not be given out to homeowners that build or plan to build a new house. Grant dollars will be given out on a first come first serve basis. Grant payments shall be paid after submittal of all bills and final system inspection and approval. Grant amounts will be at a rate of 50% not to exceed \$10,000 for households in the low income category based on the 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Grant amounts will be paid to the homeowner after the certificate of compliance has been issued by the Pipestone County Conservation & Zoning Office.

Payment Authorization: Administrative Staff members are authorized by the SWCD Board to approve applicant eligibility and make grant payments to landowners and/or contractors.

WELL SEALING PROGRAM

Cost-share: Pipestone SWCD will cost-share on well sealing's up to 90% of the total cost, not to exceed \$800 payout per well without board approval.

Eligibility: Funding is on a first come basis. All cost-share applications must be received prior to project completion.

BUFFERS

Grant: Native Buffer Incentive: Pipestone SWCD will pay producers installing stream and ditch buffers 100% up to \$100 per acre for the cost of native grasses to seed buffers. Seed receipts will be used to determine eligibility and payment amounts; other program cost-share funding received for seeding will be reduced so payment will not exceed 100%.

Compliance Plan: PIPESTONE SWCD MONITORING PLAN FOR BUFFER COMPLIANCE TRACKING. §103F.48 RIPARIAN PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY PRACTICES. To ensure riparian protections continue to exist, compliance tracking of *all parcels in Pipestone County subject to the Buffer Law will be monitored at least once every three years* starting November 2, 2018 and upon release of new, updated, aerial imagery. Means of compliance tracking may include, but is not limited to: use of available imagery sources, field visits, etc...

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES

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At any point in time, the SWCD may complete compliance spot checks at random and for any reason, conduct field reviews, handle complaints whenever necessary, and issue a validation of compliance if requested.

Eligibility: Funding is on a first come basis. Funds will be utilized from the current year's NRBG Land Water Management Water Sample funds.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Bussing: Pipestone SWCD will pay bussing costs for schools that attend the Environmental Fair when requested.

SRAM

Grant: Landowners who agree to enter into a contract, will receive \$80/acre/year on enrolled pastureland for the lifetime of the contract (10 years). Payment will be delivered in a one-time lump sum during the first year of the contract. Enrolled acres of pastureland shall not be grazed April 1st through September 30th but can be hayed once during the summer beginning after June 15th as long as a 4"-6" stubble height is maintained at all times. Hay bales should be removed before inclement winter weather prevents removal which at no time shall be later than November 15th. The SWCD will be granted access and allowed to inspect the SRAM acres enrolled on the property listed above throughout the lifespan of the program. Vegetative spot checks to verify program compliance will be conducted at various times during the contract term on land enrolled in the program.

Cost-share: The cost-share rate using only 319-grant funds for the project on areas within the contract area is 75% of the total eligible installation project costs and will not exceed this amount. All cost-sharable items must be contiguous to the contract area and a part of the same pasture system. The cost-share rate using only 319-grant funds for the project on areas outside of the contract area is 50% not to exceed \$200 per acre of the contracted number of acres for eligible installation project costs. Areas outside of the contracted area may include land within or outside of our priority watershed areas that will have a positive impact on the project. Projects may partner with and utilize other funding sources to increase their cost-share rate to a maximum of 90% of total eligible installation project costs on areas within the contracted area and a maximum of 75% of total eligible installation project costs on areas outside of the contracted area. All invoices and receipts must be submitted to the SWCD in order to be eligible for cost-share reimbursement.

Eligibility: Eligibility for a SRAM contract and project funding is currently limited to those landowners who own riparian pastureland and pastureland within the 100-year floodplain immediately adjacent to the Pipestone, Split Rock, or Mound Creeks and their tributaries within designated HUC12 watersheds. Eligible pastureland must also be actively grazed or grazed within five out of the last ten years. A minimum buffer width of 30 feet and a maximum buffer width of 120 feet or extent of 100-year floodplain with 10% round out will be used to determine eligible acres of the buffer. If more than 10% round out is needed to create a practical application, those applications will be discussed and approved on a case by case basis.

The designated HUC12 watersheds are as follows:

Pipestone Creek:	101702031301	Split Rock Creek:	101702031601	Mound Creek:	101702040109
	101702031302		101702031602		
	101702031303		101702031603		

PIPESTONE SWCD PROGRAM POLICIES 2025

Pipestone Monument Water Retention

Program funding will be limited to lands located within the watershed of Pipestone County Ditch #1 and which flow into the Pipestone National Monument. These practices are being targeted to reduce sediment and nutrient (ecoli) levels at the Pipestone National Monument.

A. Water Retention structures

1. Practices must be installed in locations within the Ditch System which have overland flow that outlet directly into the ditch system.
 - a. Must follow NRCS practice standard (638, 629)
 - b. Contracts will be for a period of 10 years
2. Payment Rates
 - a. Practice installation
 - i. Landowner will be compensated 100% of the actual cost not to exceed contract amount.
 - b. Water Storage Payment: This is the area where water will be temporarily ponded following storm events. Area is able to be farmed as normal.
 - i. Onetime payment of \$2,000 per acre

B. Subsurface Sewage System Treatment Update

1. Incentive payments will be provided to those existing systems which are considered an imminent health threat or failing systems.
 - a. System updates must be done in accordance with MN Rule 7080 and Pipestone County Zoning Ordinance.
2. Incentive Payment
 - a. Incentive payments up to 75% of the costs not to exceed \$15,000 will be provided to those imminent health threat systems which have a direct discharge to surface waters. Other imminent health threat systems and failing systems will receive up to 50% of systems costs not to exceed \$10,000.
 - b. Funding will be provided on a first come first serve basis, and updates must be completed within 6 months from date of grant application approval.

SWCD Chairman