



Meeting Minutes

DeKalb County

Soil and Water Conservation District

Call to order Annual Meeting

The Monthly Board Meeting of the DeKalb County SWCD was held on June 10, 2026. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Kuhn at 7:04 p.m.

Attendees

Directors: Rick Bend, Paul Kuhn, Lynn Martz and Anita Zurbrugg.

Associate Directors: Peggy Anesi, Jim Arndt, Stan Doty and Paul Koeppen.

Staff: Grace Coveliers, Resource Conservationist; Dean Johnson, Executive Director; and Brooke Watson, Administrative Coordinator.

NRCS: Aaron Seim

IDOA: Not Present

Directors not present included: Dan Kenney

Guests: Garrett Kean (DeKalb County Forest Preserves Americorps Intern)
and Hope Nordbrock (University of Illinois Extension Intern)

Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve the June 10, 2026 agenda made by Chairman Kuhn, seconded by Director Martz. Motion carried.

Approval of minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 13, 2026 made by Director Martz and seconded by Director Zurbrugg. Motion carried.

Approval of Treasurers Report

Motion to approve the Treasurers Report made by Director Bend. Director Zurbrugg seconded the motion, motion carried.

Reports

NRCS- Aaron Seim provided an update on the activities of the NRCS office for the month of May and the outlook for June. Due to an increase in EQIP applications nationally, NRCS asked for and received a funding increase from the original 16 million allocation for Illinois. An additional 20 million dollars for Illinois has been secured for EQIP and staff has been informally advised that a third round of funding is likely coming. Although the third round of funding has not been confirmed, it is anticipated that the total value of EQIP funding in 2026 for Illinois will likely be between 40-50 million dollars. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) deadline has been extended to June 26, 2026. The annual HEL/Wetland Compliance review has been completed and all farms were in compliance. This year, a much smaller percentage of farms were pulled for review. All NRCS DCs have unofficially been told that they will be attending this year's AISWCD Annual Conference.

NREC- Peggy Anesi provided an update on the activities of the Extension office for the month of May and the outlook for June. Due to low enrollment, the May-June session of the Master Watershed Stewards program was cancelled. It will be rescheduled for the Fall of 2026, with promotion starting later this summer. Extension is collaborating with Purdue University on rainscaping work. University of Illinois Extension - DeKalb County has been selected for a grant to host one of six, rainscaping demonstration sites across Illinois. Peggy will be installing a rain garden at the Genoa Water Treatment Plant and soil testing of the site is starting soon. She anticipates having a budget of approximately \$6,000 to cover the cost of the project. The rain garden demonstration site will be monitored, with reports compared against the other demonstration sites in various regions of the state. Camp Russell has been re-branded and re-launched in partnership with 4-H, to Nature Explorers Camp. It begins this month with significant partnership and programming support from 4-H, who is expanding their efforts to reach new audiences for recruitment. Promotion has started with the distribution of bookmarks featuring Carol Freeman nature photography and a QR code with a link to camp registration information. Peggy is excited about the immediate impact that Extension Intern, Hope Nordbrock, has made on several projects. One of those projects is River Watch, which was cancelled statewide earlier this year when funding was cancelled, but DeKalb County Forest Preserves found resources to continue part of the River Watch work. Hope provided a report of the projects she has been working on, as did Garrett Kean, the DeKalb County Forest Preserves Americorps Intern.

Administrative Coordinator- Brooke Watson provided a written report on her activities for the month of May and the outlook for June.

Resource Conservationist- Grace Coveliers provided a written report on her activities for the month of May and the outlook for June.

Executive Director- Dean Johnson provided a written report on his activities for the month of May and the outlook for June.

DeKalb County Watersheds Council: Dean Johnson shared the next DeKalb County Watersheds Council meeting is Wednesday, July 29 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau.

Correspondence

The Illinois Department of Agriculture notified DeKalb County SWCD that 2026 funding will remain the same as last year, at \$41,000 for operations.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture reported selections for the inaugural Infield Conservation for Operationalizing Vital Ecosystem Resilience (I-COVER) Program. One producer per county was selected but a second may be announced at a later date if funds are available. DeKalb County SWCD has been notified that \$13,827.61 will be awarded for the project. Zvezda farms was selected to utilize wheat as a cover crop on two fields, totaling 34.37 acres and funds will be distributed over the next three years. IDOA will not be funding any PFC projects this year, as the funds earmarked for I-COVER were taken from the 2026 PFC budget.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency requested updates for the 604B grant for the Somonauk Creek Watershed Plan, indicating it is moving forward. Since the anticipated start date will be September 1, 2026, the main contact person was updated from Dean Johnson to Grace Coveliers.

The DeKalb County Farm Bureau seeded two natural area plots being added within the lawn, off of West Prairie Drive. Each plot will feature a native seed mix, as was suggested in the Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan, to improve stormwater runoff and pollutant filtration, as well as reduce erosion.

University of Illinois Extension reminded DeKalb County SWCD of the outstanding \$15,000 invoice due June 30, 2026, which provides funding support for the Natural Resources Extension Coordinator position.

Time Sheet Approval

Employee Time Sheets Reviewed and Approved By: Director Martz

Unfinished business

None

New business

Annual Budget and Strategic Plan Meeting - set for Monday, June 29 at 10 a.m. at the DeKalb County SWCD offices with the Board of Directors and staff.

Approve CPA for SWCD Financial Review- Director Bend moved to approve Foster Tax and Accounting LLC to complete the annual financial review and Comptrollers Report. Director Martz seconded the motion, motion carried.

Credit Card for the Administrative Coordinator-Director Martz made a motion to approve adding a credit card for the Administrative Coordinator. Director Bend seconded the motion, motion carried.

Conservation Minute- Grace Coveliers shared the new DeKalb County Interactive Watershed Maps, available on the DeKalb County Watersheds Council website. It features all of the points with their priority levels from the “Management Measures Action Plan” from all of the completed watershed plans, along with NIU water quality sampling sites, streambank and riparian area restoration recommendations, wetland restoration recommendations, other “Management Measure Recommendations,” outlines of each watershed planning area, the National Wetland Inventory and DeKalb County Wetland Inventory, HUC-12 Watersheds and FEMA Floodplains. Each feature also has an interactive note linking to the specific page where each point is mentioned in the various watershed plans, so viewers can learn more details about its designation.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Director Martz moved to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Director Bend.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Announcements

The next meeting of the DeKalb County SWCD will be on July 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau’s Center for Agriculture in Sycamore Illinois.

Chairman

Date