



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 September 9, 2026 at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau's Center for Agriculture in Sycamore Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Kuhn at 7:08 p.m.

Attendees

Directors: Dan Kenney, Paul Kuhn, Lynn Martz and Anita Zurbrugg

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

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

NRCS: Aaron Seim

IDOA: Not Present

Directors not present included: Rick Bend

Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve the October 14, 2026 agenda made by Director Kenney, seconded by Director Martz. Motion carried.

Approval of minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 9, 2026 made by Director Zurbrugg and seconded by Director Kenney. Motion carried.

Approval of Treasurers Report

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

Reports

NRCS- Aaron Seim provided a report on his activities for the month of September and the outlook for October. Nationally and statewide, NRCS is undergoing reorganization. The Sycamore office staff will add a third county to their territory. Starting October 1, 2026, the NRCS Sycamore office staff will oversee DeKalb, Lee and Ogle County. There are no current NRCS staff in Lee County but a position

has been posted for an NRCS Soil Conservationist, that will be located there. NRCS Sycamore office staff will rotate coverage to have a physical presence at the Lee County office, located in Amboy. In February 2027 it is expected that the NRCS Lee County office will join Lee County FSA in relocating to a new building, also in Amboy. IDOA has a Conservation Planner position posted for Lee County, who would also work from the NRCS Lee County office. Like NRCS, IDOA does not currently have any staff in Lee County. The end of the USDA fiscal year is approaching on September 30, 2026, with NRCS working to finalize reporting and projects concluding then, while also looking ahead to the start of the new fiscal year on October 1, 2026.

NREC- No report.

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

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

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

DeKalb County Watersheds Council: Grace Coveliers shared that she is transitioning to the role of DeKalb County Watersheds Coordinator. The next DeKalb County Watersheds Council meeting is Monday, September 21 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau. A Sub-Committee of the Council has been meeting to plan the DeKalb County Water Futures Summit for March 13, 2027. This one-day event will feature speakers and breakout sessions focused on sharing information about water quality and impact. It will be a continuation of the momentum from last year's Watersheds for Leaders program.

Correspondence

Dean is continuing to work with Rep. Jeff Keicher, who has been concerned about failed attempts at securing SWCD funding. Rep. Keicher believes SWCDs need to seek support and guidance from The Nature Conservancy, as he has seen many of their policy proposals experience success getting through the General Assembly. He has worked with Ashley Maybanks, Director of Government Relations at The Nature Conservancy, and efforts are ongoing to coordinate a meeting with DeKalb SWCD, Eliot Clay from AISWCD and Ashley in September.

SWCD staff have continued to have conversations with key stakeholders about the aquifer 3D mapping opportunity, also known as Helicopter Time-Domain Electromagnetics (HTEM). U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood held a Town Hall event in DeKalb last month, where a member of the DeKalb Sustainability Alliance (DSA) asked about her knowledge and interest in HTEM. The DSA member also

shared about DeKalb SWCD's interest in a county wide project. Rep. Underwood provided contact information for her Chief of Staff and expressed interest in having a meeting to learn more with DeKalb SWCD. Brooke is working with Rep. Underwood's staff to coordinate a meeting.

Dean also had a conversation about the aquifer 3D mapping/HTEM opportunity with Derek Hiland, Director of Community Development for DeKalb County. He would like Dean to do a presentation about the HTEM project at an upcoming DeKalb County Planning, Zoning & Development Committee meeting. This will hopefully create support among DeKalb County officials and the DeKalb County Board. The next Planning, Zoning & Development Committee meeting is scheduled for September 23 at 6:30 p.m. Attendance from DeKalb County SWCD Directors is encouraged to signal additional support.

DeKalb County is hiring a Water Specialist. This is a new position and Derek Hiland is hopeful about the collaboration opportunities between this role and DeKalb County SWCD.

DeKalb County has not provided FY27 funding yet for DeKalb County SWCD. In previous years, this support arrived in August. According to DeKalb County officials, they expect the funding to be distributed in October 2026.

Time Sheet Approval

Employee Time Sheets Reviewed and Approved By: Director Zurbrugg

Unfinished business

None

New business

Soil Health Assessment - Grace Coveliers shared a presentation to review the 2026 Soil Health Assessment for DeKalb County. This is the first year of a new annual report required by IDOA. The report utilizes data from DeKalb County STAR Assessments, county profiles and the Transect survey. Director Martz moved to approve the 2026 Soil Health Assessment. Director Zurbrugg seconded the motion, motion carried.

PFC- Grace Coveliers shared a presentation to review the FY25 PFC Grassed Waterway project being completed by Paul Rasmussen. Director Zurbrugg moved to approve payment of \$20,390.93 to Paul Rasmussen for the Grassed Waterway project. Director Martz seconded the motion, motion carried.

FFA Soil Contest: DeKalb County FFA advisors are organizing the 2026 Section 6 FFA Dairy and Soil Contest, to be held on Thursday, October 8, 2026 at Heinson Dairy Farm in Kirkland. They have asked for DeKalb County SWCD's assistance in securing soil judges and for providing lunch again this year. Director Zurbrugg moved to approve providing lunch for students, educators, judges and volunteers for the 2026 Section 6 FFA Dairy and Soil Contest, utilizing funding from the Samardzija grant. Director Kenney seconded the motion, motion carried.

November Board of Directors Meeting - Director Martz made a motion to move the November Board of Directors meeting to November 18, to avoid a conflict with Veterans Day on November 11. Director Kenney seconded the motion, motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Director Martz moved to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Director Kenney. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Announcements

The next meeting of the DeKalb County SWCD will be on November 18, 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