



# Meeting Minutes DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District

## Call to order Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the DeKalb County SWCD was held on March 11, 2026. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Kuhn at 12:33 p.m.

## Attendees

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

**Associate Directors:** Peggy Anesi and Paul Koeppen

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

**NRCS:** Aaron Seim

**IDOA:** Not Present

## Directors not in attendance

**Members not present included:** Dan Kenney

## Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve the March 11, 2026 agenda made by Director Martz seconded by Director Zurbrugg. Motion carried.

## Approval of minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2026 made by Director Martz and seconded by Director Bend. Motion carried.

## Approval of Treasurers Report

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

## Reports

**NRCS-** Aaron Seim provided an update on the activities of the NRCS office for the month of February and the outlook for March. Aaron reported about the new NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program, which is a single application but can provide funding through EQIP or CSP. To qualify, producers must complete a whole-farm assessment, use at least one of the NRCS primary regenerative management practices and perform soil health testing in the first and last year of the contract. The EQIP deadline has been extended a second time, to April 2, 2026.

**NREC-** Peggy Anesi provided an update on the activities of University of Illinois Extension for the month of February and the outlook for March. Peggy reported a good turnout and discussion for her program about beavers. She has gotten several requests to speak about rain gardens for local groups, which she has been transitioning to a stronger focus on using rain gardens as a tool for stormwater management. Registration from the University of Illinois Extension Master Watershed Stewards program is coming soon, which will include four classroom sessions and a fieldtrip.

**Administrative Coordinator-** Brooke Watson provided a written report on her activities for the month of February and the outlook for March.

**Resource Conservationist-** Grace Coveliers provided a written report on her activities for the month of February and the outlook for March.

**Executive Director-** Dean Johnson provided a written report on his activities for the month of February and the outlook for March.

## Correspondence

Congratulations to Dan Kenney, Paul Kuhn and Anita Zurbrugg on their re-election to the SWCD Board.

Dean met with representatives from Leeward Energy to discuss two projects in DeKalb County. They discussed the Solar Energy System Landscape Plan and Maintenance-Monitoring Plan Review and the policies for the Solar Energy System Annual Monitoring and Maintenance Report Review.

DeCarbon DeKalb Dialogue event was a success. About 18 people attended the meeting and were very engaged. DeCarbon DeKalb has also extended an invitation to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Earth Fest on Saturday, April 11 at the NIU Founders Library.

DeKalb County has reached out to Directors with reminders to complete Board Financial Disclosure forms.

A contractor seeding a solar site in DeKalb County wanted to rent the no-till drill to plant the site's native vegetation seeding mix. The consensus of the Board is that this project does not meet the conservation standards to partner with DeKalb County SWCD and Pheasants Forever.

Apex Clean Energy has started soliciting landowners about a wind energy project in northern DeKalb County. Chairman Kuhn has had communication with Apex and other interested landowners, about 50 year leases which they say will increase property values and generate significant tax revenue. They have not yet reached out to DeKalb County SWCD about NRIs.

Discussion took place about other rumored solar and nuclear energy projects in DeKalb County and northern Illinois.

Director Martz and her husband Mike, received the 2026 Prairie Farmer Master Farmers award.

## Time Sheet Approval

Employee Time Sheets Reviewed and Approved By: Director Martz

## Unfinished business

**NRI Fees**-Discussion continued about increasing the fees for NRI reports. A recommendation was made to increase the NRI fee for projects that are 0-5 acres to \$1,000. Projects that are 6-100 acres will pay the base fee of \$1,000 plus \$40 per acre. Projects over 100 acres will pay the base fee of \$1,000, plus \$40 per acre for acres 6-100, plus \$25 per acre for each acre over 100 acres. Wind energy projects will be assessed a \$1,600 per turbine fee. Wind energy transmission stations will follow the previously outlined NRI fee model. Director Zurbrugg moved to approve the updated NRI fee model. Director Bend seconded the motion, motion carried.

## New business

**Election of Officers**- Chairman Kuhn moved to maintain the current set of officers for 2026. Director Zurbrugg seconded the motion, and the motion carried 4 yes and 0 nays. Chairman- Paul Kuhn, Vice-Chairman Dan Kenney, Secretary Anita Zurbrugg and Treasurer Lynn Martz.

**Local Work Group**- will convene on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 10 a.m.

**DCSWCD Strategic Plan** - will be revisited and discussed at a future Board meeting.

## Adjournment

**Motion to Adjourn:** Chairman Kuhn moved to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Director Zurbrugg.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

## Announcements

The next meeting of the DeKalb County SWCD will be on April 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.

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Chairman

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Date