

**CASS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
JANUARY 7, 2010**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman James Ballenthin at 10:04 am.

**Present were:** Chair.-James Ballenthin, Vice Chair.-J. David Harder, Secretary-Willard Pehling, Treasurer-Thomas Kuschel, Member-Kenneth LaPorte, Retiring Dist. Man.-John Sumption, New Dist. Man.-John Ringle, Dist. Clerk-Brenda Davis, NRCS-Richard Schossow, Lee Westfield of Pro-West, John Powers and Josh Stevenson of the Cass County Land Department.

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to approve the Rotation of Officers. Motion carried.**

**Rotation of Officers is as follows:**

**Chairman-J. David Harder**

**Vice Chairman-Willard Pehling**

**Secretary-Thomas Kuschel**

**Treasurer-Kenneth LaPorte**

**Member-James Ballenthin**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to approve the agenda with the following additions: Area VIII Meeting, Grazing Workshop Update, Add Cass County Land Departments Draft or the Long Range Management Plan. Motion carried.**

**M/S Thomas Kuschel/James Ballenthin to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

**Josh, John & Lee/Cass County Land Department:**

Josh stated that the land department had decided to change the trail posting system. Right now the policy is that the trails are closed unless posted open. The new posting system will be open unless posted closed. This would be easier for the land department to enforce. He asked for any further comments to the draft version before it goes to the public. Jim Ballenthin had a few comments. One item that was discussed was who can use what type of vehicle and when on the trails. Certain items can't be determined though. Such as any climate change effect and what effect the Emerald Ash Borer will have. The State Auditor has actually recommended that other counties manage their county lands using the Cass County Land Resource Management Plan. **M/S Willard Pehling/James Ballenthin to move forward with the Cass County Long Range Resource Management Plan as proposed but to include the comments made by James Ballenthin. Motion carried.**

**John Sumption & John Ringle Report:**

John Sumption's last day with Cass SWCD/ESD is tomorrow (01/08/2010). He mentioned how strange it is that for most of his term, either a Sumption or a LaPorte has been on or working for the SWCD/ESD. It's hard leaving but it is time. He reminded the SWCD that being autonomous is no longer such a good idea and he commended Cass SWCD for being a leader in that area.

John Ringle wanted to thank John S. for his continued tutelage this past three months. John S. will be a tough act to follow but he is excited to get started. In response to John S's words....it is interesting to see other counties/districts following suit.

### **NRCS – Rick Schossow Report:**

Rick explained a date needed to be set for the Local Work Group. It was decided that January 28, 2010 at 10:00 am would work for everyone. There is no direct funding for counties this year. All counties will compete for funding. Rick has processed 19 EQIP apps this year. Just a reminder, according to the Freedom of Information Act, no private info can be made public. **M/S Thomas Kuschel/Kenneth LaPorte to approve and sign the Freedom of Information Act. Motion carried.** John S. wanted to know if there was a release form and Rick stated that there was. The mailing list of the ag producers in the Lake Margaret Watershed was made available. The list must stay in house but can be used to notify/identify the producers. There were 70 producers identified. There are 40 people registered for the Leader Lions Winter Workshop.

### **Supervisor's Reports:**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the mileage rate at the current IRS mileage rate of .50. Motion carried.**

HOP questionnaires need to be finished ASAP. Please fill out the forms and return to Brenda so she can send them to the Initiative Foundation. Once the questionnaires have been reviewed, Cass SWCD needs to hold another Visioning Session to complete our HOP.

The supervisors liked the Cooperative Effort letter that was sent out to the neighboring SWCD's. Let's wait until after January 18<sup>th</sup> to hold the meeting for those that respond. The district managers plus two supervisors from each district should attend. John R., J. David Harder and James Ballenthin will attend from Cass SWCD.

Jim informed the supervisors that he had informed the Cass County Commissioners of his appointment to the PAC/BOA board and of Ken's appointment to represent Cass SWCD and WesMin RC&D.

Just a reminder....a Liaisons Meeting needs to be set up ASAP.

Brenda mentioned that the final audit report is not ready yet but that the audit firm did a very thorough job on the audit. Some of their comments to the two John's and to Brenda were as follows: Cass SWCD needs to diversify their banking institutions and spend some money!

Dan Steward was in the office and performed a final cost share audit on three years.

Jim provided a schedule for the next year's worth of Area VIII meetings. We need some discussion items for the meetings.

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to approve the Drought Assistance Final Financial Report. Motion Carried.**

**Cost-Share Application:**

ERS Retta Freeman has approved all erosion control and revegetation planting as this time. Amount that was approved for cost-share was \$3,607.50.

**M/S James Ballenthin/Kenneth LaPorte to approve payment of CS136(09) Bryce & Cathy Norelius as submitted. Motion carried.**

**Vouchers:**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to pay vouchers as presented. Motion carried.**

**Adjourn:**

**M/S James Ballenthin/Willard Pehling to adjourn. Motion carried.**

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Secretary, Board of Supervisor's

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Date

**CASS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
FEBRUARY 4, 2010**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman J. David Harder at 10:07 am.

**Present were:** Chair.-J. David Harder, Vice Chair.-Willard Pehling, Secretary-Thomas Kuschel, Treasurer-Kenneth LaPorte, Member-James Ballenthin. Dist. Man.-John Ringle, Dist. Clerk-Brenda Davis, and NRCS-Richard Schossow.

**M/S Willard Pehling/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the agenda with the following additions: Area VIII Meeting, Forestry Meeting and WesMin RC& D Report. Motion carried.**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

**John Ringle Report:**

John reported that all of HOP surveys are in to the Initiative Foundation. Once Cathy Hartle has reviewed the surveys and lets John know everything is OK.....then we can set up the exit meeting. If everything can be worked out, we will schedule the exiting meeting for the afternoon of March 4<sup>th</sup>.

John has never met with Pat Schuett but Jim B. has. Pats letter to the SWCD states that he would like to do his thesis based on the SWCD's woodlot program. Pat Welle, the BSU professor from BSU has had a good working relationship with Cass County and Cass SWCD. No one knows at this point how much money would be involved (if any) and how many hours it would take Pat S. to complete his thesis. John will contact the various associations that are connected to the woodlot program and see if they have any objections to the possibility that their names may get mentioned in the thesis and will then contact Professor Welle and Pat Schuett.

The final 2006 audit is not complete yet. The auditor is waiting for the preliminary approval from the State Auditors office. They did mention three areas of concern: 1.Need a stamp to put on the back of the checks, 2.We need to move some of our money to other financial institutions because we have too much in First National, 3.Superviors should hold their offices longer that one year.

Jim wanted to now if the SWCD supervisors' positions actually had job descriptions? Brenda will check into this and report at the March meeting.

John Sumption usually prepared the SWCD budget because it was needed for the County/District budget meetings. All supervisors would like to have some say in the final budget. John R. and Brenda will prepare a preliminary budget for review at the next SWCD meeting.

No future JPB meeting scheduled and no new information to distribute.

There has been no 3 county meeting scheduled at this time. Beltrami and Crow Wing SWCD's are interested in getting together though. It was decided that February 11th or 12<sup>th</sup> would work good for Dave and Jim to attend. John will try to set it up. We are still expecting a start date for Kelly Condiff to be May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Shoreland Grants that Cass County applied for were not approved. Kelly has been guaranteed money from DNR though. Some of the cost-share funds should be able to be used in some way as well.

Cost-share money is available for well sealing. This is not something Cass has used in the past but it would work good with the non compliant sewers that need to be upgraded.

**M/S James Ballenthin/Willard Pehling to add well sealing to the list of eligible projects through the Cass Soil and Water Conservation District and the approved Board of Water and Soil Cost-share rates for well sealing. Motion carried.**

John has a meeting scheduled with DNR this next week. The main topic will be shoreland protection and shoreland restoration. Kelly may attend with John.

### **NRCS – Rick Schossow Report:**

Rick has had a lot interest in EQIP so far this year. The WHIP program hasn't been too bad either.

The total head count for the Leader Lions Winter Grazing Workshop was 107. There were people attending from ND, WI, and SD. Rick will actually receive an award for his efforts in setting up the workshop. The area for the exhibits was intended to be inside the meeting room but there were too many people attending so the booths had to be else where.

### **Supervisor's Reports:**

No date has been set for the Liaison meeting yet. Suggested trying for the afternoon of March 4<sup>th</sup>.

Jim and Ken will attend the Legislative Day at the Capitol.

Briefly discussed the Rural Reserve Property Tax program. Our assessors department is familiar with the rural reserve and green acres requirements. Rick could do the work plan for rural reserve and green acres. Will wanted to know if there were any forms that the SWCD had to sign off on. Jim and John will check into it.

Jim and John will attend the Area VIII planning meeting for the next annual MASWCD convention which will be March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The next Area VIII meeting is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup> at Beltrami Electric. Registration will go in March 4<sup>th</sup>.

The letter from the Ruffed Grouse Society was good but.....the first paragraph should not have anything to do with timber sales. Small woodlot owners are not really interested in timber sales like they are in wildlife management.

Jim attended the BWSR forestry meeting. More financial cuts! Jim was somewhat discouraged that there is not much being done to stop the advancement of the Emerald Ash Borer.

Were you aware that the WesMin RC&D was one of the first three to be created in the US? Ken read aloud the projects that were financially supported in 2009.

**Vouchers:**

**M/S Kenneth LaPorte/James Ballenthin to pay vouchers as presented. Motion carried.**

**Adjourn:**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to adjourn. Motion carried.**

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Secretary, Board of Supervisor's

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Date

**CASS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
MARCH 4, 2010**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman J. David Harder at 10:06 am.

**Present were:** Chair.-J. David Harder, Vice Chair.-Willard Pehling, Secretary-Thomas Kuschel, Treasurer-Kenneth LaPorte, Member-James Ballenthin. Dist. Man.-John Ringle, Dist. Clerk-Brenda Davis, NRCS-Richard Schossow, and Kevin Svendsgaard of US Fish and Wildlife.

**M/S Thomas Kuschel/Willard Pehling to approve the agenda with the following additions: Small Woodlot Project, 3 county SWCD meeting, and JPB meeting. Motion carried.**

**M/S James Ballenthin/Willard Pehling/ to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

**John Ringle Report:**

It was decided that the district should complete the exit survey on April 1, 2010 beginning at 1:00 PM. Josh Stevenson and Dan Steward should be invited to attend. John and Brenda will get things all lined up. Donna Walberg will facilitate. The 2006 Final Audit was reviewed. The draft of the 2008 audit is still not available. Findings from the 2006 audit were minimal. The district should have an out of state travel policy, a stamp to put on the back of the checks regarding claims, and the supervisors' should hold their offices longer than one year. We no longer need to move funds out of First National Bank because we are actually insured for more than we thought.

A claims stamp is needed. Brenda has contacted Hummingbird Press to have one done. **M/S Willard Pehling/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the Final 2006 Cass SWCD Audit as submitted. Motion carried.**

Kevin Svendsgaard, with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, met with the board at this time. He wanted to let the board know that he would be interested in working with them to develop woodland management plans. DNR has been working with private land owners for some time to develop wetland restoration sites but they would like to expand to upland sites. Generally, when DNR works with private landowners to develop plans, 100% of the project is paid for by DNR as long as the private landowner signs a 10 year contract. Jim stated that Cass is contracted with Eric Eggen now. Would Kevin be willing to work with Eric to develop woodlot plans? Kevin stated that he thought some kind of partnership could be worked out. Will wanted to know if DNR does all the dirt work themselves or if they contract out. Kevin stated that they usually contract out.

John questioned the board to see what their thoughts were regarding hiring Kelly Condiff. Kelly is available to start working May 1<sup>st</sup>. He will be able to work off of some of the last DNR grant but that won't carry him through until July 1<sup>st</sup>. **M/S Willard**

**Pehling/James Ballenthin to pay up to \$7,500 in wages for Kelly Condiff for 2010 for projects within Cass County only. Motion carried.**

John and Brenda prepared a 2010 Fiscal Budget for the district. The board briefly discussed the items and the amounts. Everything looked good except for professional expenses. Nothing had been included for the audits. **M/S Kenneth LaPorte/James Ballenthin to approve the budget as proposed but to add \$5,000 for professional services. Motion carried.**

An email letter was distributed to all supervisors. The letter was from Chris Parthun of the Beltrami SWCD. In his letter he explained the financial difficulties the district was having and the friction between the district and the county. At this time the supervisors of Beltrami SWCD need to let Chris go. Chris hopes that the efforts the district has worked so hard to install will have not been done in vain.

**NRCS – Rick Schossow Report:**

Rick has been busy preparing EQIP and WIP applications. The signup ended February 28<sup>th</sup>. Six of the applications already come to over \$40,000. He has received four feedlot applications also. Rick is retiring May 1<sup>st</sup>. Hopefully this branch office will remain open.

**Supervisor’s Reports:**

Jim did not attend Legislative Days because he was ill. Ken did not attend because he was loading hay. Dave, Will, Jim and John will attend the Area VIII meeting in Bemidji on March 19<sup>th</sup>. John and Jim attended the MASWCD convention planning meeting. Area VIII is responsible for the hospitality room and breakfast. Donations are accepted. John will help with silent auction items.

All of Wes Min funds for 2010 have been pulled and that leaves them with zero funds for 2010. Ken mentioned that maybe it was time the district thought about putting some funds into CD’s.

Briefly discussed Pat Schuett’s thesis. **M/S James Ballenthin/Willard Pehling to approve \$1,000 for Pat Schuett’s survey. Motion carried.**

Other items to mention.....The JPB needs some new equipment. Chris Parthun worked tirelessly to keep the JPB up and running. Cass SWCD seldom utilized their surveying services.

The last 3 county meeting went as well as could be expected. Beltrami SWCD is really caught between a rock and a hard spot. They have a forester on staff that they would be willing to “share” with Cass SWCD. Why couldn’t we give the \$200.00 that we give to Eric Eggen for completed woodlot plans to the Beltrami forester instead? The Crow Wing SWCD has already moved into the courthouse. No final MOU has been signed between Crow Wing County and Crow Wing SWCD yet though.

Brenda requested permission to attend the Spring Administrative Session to be held in Alexandria March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. M/S James Ballenthin/Thomas Kuschel to send Brenda and pay expenses. Motion carried.

**Vouchers:**

**M/S Thomas Kuschel/Kenneth LaPorte to pay vouchers as presented. Motion carried.**

**Adjourn:**

**M/S Willard Pehling/Thomas Kuschel to adjourn. Motion carried.**

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Secretary, Board of Supervisor's

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Date