

DRAFT

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For September 17th, 2026, at 4:30 pm

Board Members Present: Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Adam Cook (Vice-Chair), Patrick Smith (Treasurer), Ross Kostin, John Burke, and Anthony Levato

Excused Board Members: Jackie teRiele

Staff Present: Alivia Bleau (Manager), Melissa Woods (Secretary/Assistant Treasurer), Allycia Foote (Technician)

- I. **Call to Order:** at 4:29 pm
- II. **Agenda** (Attachment A)
- III. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** *Motion to approve the August 20, 2026 minutes, made by Cook, seconded by Smith, approved by all.*
- IV. **Reports**
 - A. **Board of Legislators** –Anthony Levato
 1. Levato stated the county has hired a new Highway Superintendent and that is Ryan Herron.
 2. Levato said all county vehicles will have forward facing cameras installed, a proposal to demolish 6 buildings with hopes to build new buildings and grounds offices have been put on hold, the BOL passed a resolution to try and do something about the cormorants but this is proving difficult since they are a protected species.
 - B. **Ag and Farmland Protection Board** – Bob Andrews
 1. Andrews stated their next meeting is in October and the major topic for discussion is solar farms and the definition of prime agricultural farm land.
 2. Andrews stated the Rich Road solar project has been pushed back to 2028 as of now, according to the SLC Planning department.
 - C. **NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee** – Ryan Cunningham
 1. Cunningham stated that our Annual Plan of Work and our Part B Plan are both due by November 1st.
 2. Cunningham said CRF Round 10 should be out in a couple of weeks, and those proposals are due before the end of the year.
 3. Cunningham said they are looking for new ideas on Eco-Based Management grant opportunities, and they will be releasing an engineering grant to help offset the cost of Professional Engineering services to land owners with projects.
 4. Cunningham stated the next managers meeting will be November 4th and 5th.
- V. **SWCD Reports:**
 - A. **Treasurer's Reports:** Melissa Woods
 1. Woods did her normal monthly procedures, and closed the bank account for AEM Round 18, and did some QuickBooks research on upgrading to Enterprise.
 2. *Motion to allow Woods to transfer up to \$40,000 from Money Market Savings account to the checking account to pay for October expenses, made by Cook, seconded by Levato, approved by all.*

Motion to approve the August 2026 Treasurers Report, made by Burke, seconded by Smith, approved by all.

B. Technician Report- Allycia Foote

1. Foote has continued working on AEM Round 19, doing site visits, and is working on 6 soil health plan, 2 grazing plans, and 2 farmstead plans.
2. Foote has been doing a lot of soil sampling and outreach events. She attended the Canton Farmers Market, an Organic Pasture Walk, soil testing webinar through CCE, AgNPS Round 31 debrief meeting, attended Northeast Ultimate Grazing School, and working with SLC Land trust for some stream bank questions.
3. Foote has also been working on the upcoming Newsletter which will go out in October.
4. Foote stated there will be a webinar for Awardees for AgNPS Round 31 the end of September and she is currently working on a Plan of Work for that project.

C. Forester's Report- Aaron Barrigar

1. Barrigar continues to work on Part B and AEM Forest Management Plans, doing landowner assistance and site visits.
2. Barrigar has been assisting the Village of Potsdam with UCFG, and working on Water Quality Symposium classes and finding presenters.

D. Technician Report- Heidi Knafelc

1. Knafelc worked at the NYS Fair tabling the state Soil and Water booth.
2. Knafelc completed 2 Ag Values, and worked on 2 inventories and 3 data entries for Forest Management Plans.

E. Manager Report- Alivia Bleau

1. Bleau completed a site visit for erosion, did pay scale research and prep, worked on Tapping into your Lands Potential contract, wetland permit and paperwork, and prepped for the local governance conference.
2. Bleau attended NAACC training, CDEA meeting, and state Envirothon meeting. Bleau has Con Skills workshop in October, Managers meeting early November and Admin conference in mid-November.
3. Bleau also stated that NRCS will be hiring a Soil Conservationist that will be in the Canton office, that posting will go out in January.

VI. Old Business:

- A.** Discussion on changing the definition for personal time which will be finalized when we approve our handbook for 2027.
- B.** Discussion on how SWCD will give raises going forward, Bleau put together a pay scale with different steps and grades as a guide to give raises. The BOD would like table emailed to them and they will look into it further and decide next month.
- C.** Discussion on vacation buy-back program. Bleau came up with some examples and will send some different options to the BOD and will make a decision next month.
- D.** Discussion on Cover Crop update with the mixed species receiving a higher reimbursement rate.

VII. New Business:

- A.** Discussion on how we would like to do evaluations going forward. Talked about the staff evaluating the manager and how the BOD would like that done. The BOD would like Bleau to give the staff a form to fill out and the staff will then send that to the BOD before they evaluate Bleau. The staff evaluations will be done by the manager with a new form this year that includes a section on self-evaluation along with manager input.

- B.** Discussion on a 6th full time employee. The BOD would like Bleau to put together some information on what our current intern could do when she is finished with current obligations and will consider keeping her on staff for the rest of the year.

Smith left at 5:58 pm

- C.** Discussion on NRCS Forestry. DEC is ending contract with NRCS and NRCS is wondering if SWCD would like to take on those projects and write Forest Management Plans for EQIP and CSP. We would only be doing plans for SLC landowners and we would get reimbursed through our current contract.

VIII. Correspondence: Mail was available for the Board's review.

IX. Announcements: None

X. Next Meeting: October 22, 2026 4:30 p.m.

XI. Meeting Adjourned: *Motion to adjourn at 6:09 p.m., made by Cook, seconded by Levato, approved by all.*

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Melissa Woods, Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

Date