



BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Time: 9:35AM- 10:26AM

Location: USDA Farm Service Agency, 2408 E. Benson Rd Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Attendees: Deron Ruesch, Jeremy Schelhaas, Michelle Burke, Tyson Cerkowniak, Jay Gilbertson, Daniel Wehmeyer, Jose Alvarez, Jaelynn Dreckman, Tanner Clausen, John Parker, Brian Top, Travis Entenmen, Troy Lambert

1. **Call to order Minnehaha Conservation District Project Sponsor** - (Called to Order at 9:35AM by John Parker)
2. **Approval of Agenda** - (1st by Jay Gilbertson, 2nd by John Parker, Approved by John Parker)
3. **Approval of March 17th 2026 meeting minutes** - (1st by Jay Gilbertson, 2nd by Travis Entenmen, Approved by John Parker)
4. **Big Sioux River Project Segment 4 update (Tanner & Jaelynn)** - Currently have two contracts for SRAM/RBI enrolled that have over a mile of linear feet. We have 6 more in the works that total to around \$250,000 and 20,000 linear feet. We have some alternative water projects that are coming up and are about \$103,000. We have 1 project of cover crops at 160 acres. RCPP has not been funded yet but we asked for 4.3 million with a 1:1 match. We will use the priority maps to gauge who gets funded if we get approval. It will be based on the 100-yr flood plain and the ASRD streams. Switching over to events we have attended these past few months. We attended 4 different events. The first was the Ag Appreciation luncheon at the Sioux Empire Fair. We also attended Prairie Fest which had a turnout of over 650 people. We then spent 4 days teaching 5th graders at Pasque Hill about soil health and how it relates to water quality. Lastly, we attended Conservation in the City with the City of Sioux Falls. Social media is holding steady but we can always use more followers and shares to boost our engagement.
5. **NRCS programs update (Deron Ruesch)** - In FY2026 CSP obligated 32.5 million dollars while EQIP obligated 53.4 million. Sign ups for CSP and EQIP are open until September 29th, 2026 for FY2027. Over the years funding for EQIP and CSP has continued to grow making it possible to have funded 36 EQIP applications and 10 CSP applications this past year. In those applications 43 different conservation practices were used. There have been a lot of grazing systems interested in e-collars. The new EQIP will have a separate pool of money for animal waste systems. RCPP



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still has no update but FY26 but the intent is once they have approved the applications for FY26 that in November they will start the next round for FY27 in case the Big Sioux River Project's application gets denied.

6. **City of Sioux Falls** - Started a new project by Cliff Ave. The Tuthill project is looking to be completed in a year to a year and a half. The project is happening in order to stop runoff and out piping from the residential areas down the hill and roughly 500 ft from the river. The city is cleaning different parts of the river every year.
7. **EDWDD Update (Jay Gilbertson)** - The SDSU economic assessment will continue but will be asking for other results to show the gross income of the land when enrolled in the SRAM program. Hoping to have a handout to give producers to show that having the land enrolled actually can make more money than not even after the program is over. The original results are out and show what we thought to be true is true and that you are making more money on the land but no field work was done. Later this fall discussion will start with SDSU. The state and EDWDD will be pursuing the second round. In June of 2027, Jay will be retiring.
8. **Other business**
 - Minnehaha conservation district has been busy with trees and fall rush. Tree prices will be going up next year. They wanted to point out the positive effects that Tanner has had on the project since joining. The next meeting will be planned for mid to late March of 2027.
9. **Adjourn** - (Adjourned by John Parker at 10:26AM)