

Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026
Time: 1:00 pm
Place: 130 McGhee Rd., Suite 220, Sandpoint ID 83864



Attendance

Board members: Dale Van Stone, BSWCD; Jeff Connolly, BSWCD; Rick Watt, BSWCD; Chris Elliott, BSWCD.

Others: Sarah Garcia, BSWCD; Tom Fler, BSWCD; Heather Pound, ISWCC; Austin Terrell, GOSC; Cindy Lewis, NRCS.

The meeting was called to order at 1pm by Chairman Dale Van Stone.

A) Agenda Amendment Jeff moved to approve the amended agenda, adding an executive session, Rick seconded the motion. *Motion carried*

1. May 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve May 2026 Meeting Minutes by Rick, seconded by Chris. Motion carried.

2. Financials

a. *Motion to approve April 2026 financial reports by Rick, seconded by Chris. Motion carried.*

B) Agency/Grant & Guest Reports

- 1. AIS- Tom Fler:** Both stations are operating and currently fully staffed. So far there have been approximately 2,300 boats inspected and approximately \$9,000 in sticker sales. Albeni Falls recently had jet skis from a known AIS infested waterbody in Arizona who had only been out of the water for 20 hours.
- 2. SWCC – Heather Pound:** Heather provided a brief update regarding the transition of the Commission from ISDA to IDWR. IDWR/ISWCC currently working on a MOU to define the working relationship between the entities. There is work being done in 5 sections of Idaho code to reflect the changes but minimize changes
- 3. Farm Bureau:** Chris provided an update that the Farm Bureau Resolutions committee was scheduled to meet in Plummer later in the week and asked if there was any topics she should be bringing to their attention. The board discussed needs and identified that funding/support for the AIS program was a priority especially with the loss of Samuels station protection in our community. Chris also updated the Board that sadly it appears this month's Farm tour will be the last one as it has become increasingly difficult to get Farms willing to host as well as waning public interest.
- 4. Office of Species Conservation - Austin:** Austin attended the Forestry Contest with the Bear trailer and was very happy with the engagement from the students at the event. The office of species conservation will be merging with office of energy and mineral resources, and possibly the state historic office. There were 7 fencing projects, 3 in Bonner, 4 in Boundary. Bear resistant trash bins will be going up along HWY57 after they have been wrapped with bear messaging. Fish & Game has received some funding to trap and collar bears which will help provide more management information. The master naturalists are hosting a monarch & friends' event.

5. **NRCS- Cindy Lewis:** This is the first year where contract ranking is competing from Boundary to Ritzville. With the vastly different resource concerns the ranking is unfortunately not comparing apples to apples. Team 1 & 2 had 92 eligible applicants. Currently only 17 of Team 1's applicants appear to be funded under EQIP with an additional 5-8 potentially being funded through CSP. Cindy encouraged her team lead colleagues to request an additional \$2 million in funding but was not optimistic they would receive additional funding.

C) District Business

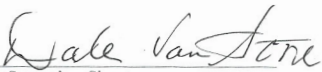
1. **County Commissioner Meeting:** The Board had discussion regarding the recent funding meeting with the Bonner County Commissioners. The Board expressed that they felt the meeting went well and were hopeful that the BoCC would approve for the District to utilize available office space at the county office.
2. **IDEA/IASCD Meeting:** Sarah updated the Board on the upcoming IASCD meeting that she is attending on IDEA's behalf as well as the subsequent IDEA summer meeting. Sarah will be out of the office the week of June 22-26 to attend the Boise meetings as well as participating with Kootenai Shoshone SWCD at the Homesteader Conference in Coeur d'Alene.
3. **FY27 Budget:** The Board reviewed the year over year comparison noting that due to changes in AIS operations there was a \$90,000 deficit YOY. The Board reviewed two separate budget options drafted to balance the budget shortfall.

- D) District Updates:** Sarah provided highlights from the Idaho State Forestry Contest. This year's top senior team was a first as it was an all-female team. There were approximately 225 contestants, the career fair grew, the scoring program had a minor issue but nothing catastrophic. The planning and setting up of the event went very smoothly this year in large part due to Michelle Sarratt's role as IC. We had new teams participate from New Meadows. Sarah is working with Bill and Heather to complete multiple 319 grant applications including one in Priest River, and two on Whiskey Jack/Boyer Slough.

- E) Executive Session:** Per Idaho code 74-206(b) Rick moved to enter executive session, Chris seconded the motion. Roll call: Dale, Yes; Jeff, Yes; Rick, Yes; Chris, Yes; The board entered executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Rick moved, seconded by Chris to exit Executive session.

Jeff moved, seconded by Chris, that due to budget constraints staffing must be reduced to balance the significant budget shortfall. Due to staff absence the Board directed Sarah Garcia, Executive Director, to notify the employee, collect their keys, and any District equipment and materials in their possession. *Motion carried.*

Rick moved, seconded by Chris, that in light of the budget shortfall draft proposal a which would return the District to a single staff office be adopted. *Motion carried.*
Motion to adjourn at 2:50pm by Jeff, seconded by Rick.


District Supervisor Signature

07/07/26
Date