

Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Minutes



Date: Tuesday, May 5th, 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; Harry Menser, BSWCD; Chris Elliott, BSWCD.

Others: Sarah Garcia, BSWCD; Julie Lakatos, BSWCD; Gail Bolin, BSWCD; Tom Fleer, BSWCD; Heather Pound, ISWCC.

Zoom: Bill Lillibridge, ISWCC; Michael (attendee did not self identify).

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by Chairman Dale Van Stone.

A)

1. April 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve April 2026 Meeting Minutes by Jeff, seconded by Rick. Motion carried.

2. Financials

- March 2026:** LGIP interest rates down 0.25% from last year. *Motion to approve March 2026 financial reports by Rick, seconded by Jeff. Motion carried.*
- CDA Books update:** Pursuit of arrangement with CDA Books will occur more after BSWCD's season of events concludes in June.

B) Agency/Grant & Guest Reports

- AIS:** Clark Fork station opened April 9th, Albany opened April 24th; fully staffed with 15 employees (down from 23 last year due to Samuels' closure). Clark Fork inspected 473 boats since opening, Albany 207 in 10 days. The new Square credit card payment system launched for sticker sales. Returning employee bonuses started this year totaling \$3,600; most staff have 3+ years experience.
- SWCC – Bill Lillibridge:** New employee Heather Pound joined the meeting for the first time. The Commission is reorganizing under IDWR. 319 grant applications are due in July.
- Lakes Commission:** Lakes Commission board meeting will be held on May 8th, 10am at the Ponderay Event Center.
- Water Festival - Gail:** There are 405 students registered for the 30th Anniversary Water Festival May 20 and 21; setup is on May 19 at 9am. Gail announced plans to move to Missouri within 2-3 months due to family. Jessica Erickson to possibly be a replacement.

C) District Business

- Seedling sale:** There are approximately 13,000 unsold white pine seedlings between Bonner and Kootenai-Shoshone (valued at ~\$9,000); viability assessment needed.
- PSP Grant:** About 5 people applied between the four districts. Money from the grant has to be spent by June 30th. A part of the funding is for marketing, in which a rack card was created on how to plant trees. It was handed out at both tree sales.

3. **AIS Summit:** Summit held in Priest River with representation from Canada, Montana, Washington, Idaho with 55 attendees on the first day. Nick, from ISD noted that quagga/zebra mussel treatment would not be feasible in Lake Pend Oreille due to depth, volume, endangered species, and cost. Prevention is the only option.
Montana's AIS program pays employees \$22/hour with state benefits and allows 5% annual increases in MOU; Idaho lacks similar structure. Bonner County Emergency Management attended and learned about their critical role in mussel response.
4. **ISDA:** Zoom meeting occurred yesterday between Chanel Tewalt, Lloyd Knight, Jeff and Sarah and discussed moving the Samuels station to Bonners Ferry. Samuels' closure removes 32% of the district's AIS contract; ISDA's AIS budget cut was \$774k, with the district taking 17% of total state reduction. ISDA stated they don't view the relationship as partnership, and refused to explain their decision rationale. Jeff reached out to local state representatives, but did not receive any response. Bonner's Ferry station had only 102 inspections vs. Albany's 207 in the same period; the new location only inspects southbound/westbound traffic.
5. **IDEA:** Elections moved to odd-year cycle per new law; current board members extended one year (no 2026 election).
6. **County Commissioner Meeting:** Thursday, May 28th at 11am to present the District and ask to maintain the current \$25,000 funding level plus in-kind office space.
7. **Hydra:** Gift certificate for \$150 to Ray Delay for use of farm grounds for District tree sale by Jeff, seconded by Rick. Motion carried.

D) District Update

1. BSWCD Report – Sarah Garcia:

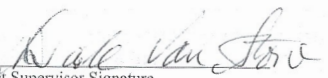
Forestry Contest: IT Services had consolidated staff and was going to ask for a fee to have staff attend the Contest, but was changed to allow attendance without fee. There are 280 registrants, which has increased from last year. The FC Steering Committee is considering moving the Contest to a Tuesday instead of Thursday due to sporting events. Bill Love may retire next year. BSWCD will be a part of the Career Fair at the Contest. Finalizing the meet-and-greet details with Tori O'Neal and Mary Huff; will notify Board of time/location.

Pack River Project: Willows in the bank are holding up well.

Grants - Sarah and Bill will conduct Boyer Slough site visit May 15 (Thursday) to assess streambank erosion and 319 grant feasibility.

Motion to adjourn at 2:12 pm by Harry, seconded by Rick.

Minutes submitted by Julie Lakatos, District Administrator.


District Supervisor Signature

06/02/26
Date