***Minutes Of June 24, 2025, LaGrange County SWCD Board of Supervisors Public Meeting***

*The LaGrange County Soil & Water Conservation District held a board meeting on June 24, 2025, at ParGil Natural Resources Learning Center, 2335 N State Road 9, LaGrange, IN 46761. The meeting was called to order by R.D. Wolheter, (Chairman) at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance were Scott Beecher, (Vice Chairman); Aaron Fugate and Monroe Raber, Ron Vaughn; (Board Supervisors); Martin Franke, (District Manager); Amy Renkenberger, (Office Coordinator),Steve Weideman; (Associate Supervisor); Randy Bixler, (President, Fish/Royer Lake Association); Erica Wyss, (NRCS-D.C.);Heath Hurst, (ISDA Resource Specialist); Pat Wiltshire,(Associate Supervisor/ Water Quality Volunteer); Jeff Burbrink, (Natural Resources Educator/Purdue Extension); Kevin Myers,(LaGrange County Commissioner); Karen Eagleson,(LaGrange County Council Member),and Camille Sczerbowicz,(Technical Support Resilient Indiana.)*

***Minutes:*** *Minutes of May27, 2025: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Monroe mentioned that on page (1) The last paragraph should read (American Forage Council instead of (Forge). Kevin Mentioned that on page (2) under the commissioner’s report, it stated that Dairy Queen would be going up on the (SE) corner, it should read the (NE) corner.* ***Monroe moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Aaron, and passed by the unanimous voice vote of the Board.***

***Financial Report:*** *Amy presented the Financial Report and asked about paying the 2025 (NACD DUES) and at what level the board would like to pay this year.* ***Scott then made a motion to approve paying the NACD dues at the gold level in the amount of $775.00, seconded by Monroe. Motion by Scott to approve the financial report as presented by Amy, seconded by Aaron, approved by unanimous voice vote of the Board***

***Agency Reports:*** *Erica reported that there**would be a revised version of the locally led during an executive session held at 5:30 before the start of the next Board meeting. IRA funds are still on hold; she had no updates. She said that she had gotten eighteen applications already for next year. Erica mentioned that a Veterans Farmer Conference was being held in Shipshewana on July 11th & 12th.*

***Purdue Extension:*** *Jeff Burbrink mentioned that he had several people in contact with him about pesticides being spread on the fields, and the possible drift effect.*

***County Council Report:*** *Karen Eagleson reported that County is pretty much holding the budget for next year. County Council does not know what to expect in terms of receipts from the State of Indiana till much later in the year, possibly October 2025.*

***County Commissioners Report****: Kevin reported that there was**going to be**a Dairy Queen going up in LaGrange County at the corner of State RD 9 and US 20 (SE corner). Kevin also mentioned that there was going to be a Five Lakes Coffee being built close to the Council On Aging.*

*Aaron announced that the County was working towards sometime in July to have the compost site re-opened.*

***ISDA****: Heath mentioned that an AG survey was available to fill out as to what information that you would like to see available online.*

***OLD BUSINESS:***

***Pretty Lake****: Ron commented that when he had spoken with Dr. Conway last, he had his E Coli testing data down to a science, and he would be starting his testing in Diehl Ditch at the end of May. Ron had spoken with Zach Holsinger, the Surveyor for LaGrange County, about the culvert at the Diehl Ditch. Ron mentioned that he was shown different pictures from other DNR associates about the different bank stabilization options. Once the culvert is replaced and the bank is re-established, the E Coli issue will seem to be less in this area. Ron is hoping to have more information to report back to the board at the June meeting.*

***E Coli Concerns: Fish/ Royer Lake:*** *Geoff Wedwaldt mentioned that he had spoken with Alf Garcia regarding the E Coli concerns at Fish/Royer Lake. He was also concerned about another source spot they may have identified that he feels needs to be investigated by the County.*

***Water Testing Program:*** *Pat mentioned that he thinks all ditches going into the lakes and the streams should be regulated, which would then require people to pay county ditch tax. He also stated that the SWQMP program was currently on week five and that they have encountered small bumps along the way, regarding equipment and supplies but overall the operation has proceeded quite well.*

***Erosion Control:*** *Kyle reported that he has had twenty-seven erosion control plans filed for this year, and that he will continue to review them as he receives them.*

***New Business/Plan of Work:*** *Amy mentioned that**the District had been quite busy with several school programs all over the county. She mentioned that she has been very busy with getting things lined up for the 2026 Northern Indiana Grazing Conference, and that Kyle had been busy scheduling meetings with the different speakers to take pictures. Amy also mentioned that the next pasture walk was being held on the Atlee Yutzy farm in Nappanee, IN on June 12th if anyone was interested in attending.*

***Pigeon River Update****: Martin reported that he had left messages for Sam Yoder from Lakeside Lumber to discuss a possible time to get together and float the Pigeon River from the bridge at State Road 9 by Howe, west of last year’s project area. Once contact has been made, plans to finish the LARE project will be made so that the project will be closed out by the end of this calendar year.*

***Education Programs****: Kyle mentioned that he and Martin had helped at Camp Amigo with a few educational programs, Camp Potawatomi, and had Lakelands 5th grade program, two days at ParGil. He also mentioned that the LaGrange County SWCD along with DeKalb and Steuben Counties, would be hosting a Conservation Camp Day on July 29th starting at the Mongo Trading Post.*

*Kyle also mentioned that it would be beneficial for his position if the District could purchase a new laptop that could have more storage for pictures, and be more useful to him, so he wouldn’t have to use his government laptop and ID card, allowing him to work more efficiently.* ***Scott moved to purchase the $1,600.00 laptop computer plus whatever software was needed at this time for educational purposes, seconded by Monroe, approved by a unanimous voice vote of the board.***

***Olive B. Cole Foundation 4 County Grant Application:*** *Martin mentioned that he had spoken with the counties involved with the grant and due to the cost of the signs they were considering having each county be responsible to get 24 signs each. Martin said he would go over some things with Aaron at the Highway Department and figure out which crossings would be best suitable for LaGrange.*

***2026 County Budget****: Martin mentioned that Jeff Campos, and Jenny Landez had met with him to go over the 2026 County Budget, and that he was told to try and cut whatever he could from the 2026 budget. Jeff said he wasn’t necessarily saying there would be no raises, just to ask for 3% for 2026.*

***Wildlife Food Plot Seed:*** *Amy mentioned that she had picked up a truck load of wildlife food plot seed from Scott Kimmel, a gentleman that was helping take over for Dave Hurley, Habitat Coordinator with Pheasants Forever Northeast Chapter. Amy has the seed bagged at the office and ready to be picked up if anyone was interested in participating in the program.*

***Items from the Floor:*** *Jeff mentioned that on August 5th Andy**Mast from near Middlebury would be hosting an Organic Weed Control Day at his farm. He said that they were also bringing in a speaker from Minnesota.*

*Ron mentioned he felt that a lot of good information was presented at the St. Joseph River Basin Commission Symposium that he attended at Camp Potawatomi.*

*Heath mentioned that on July 11th & 12th there would be a group called (Veterans IN Farming), hosting an event at the Farmstead Inn located in Shipshewana. He said he would bring the flyer to the next meeting.*

*Aaron mentioned that a lot of maintenance to county roads was in progress or planned for the summer months. Travelers should be aware of construction on the roads.*

***Meeting adjourned: By*** *R.D. Wolheter, 7:34 pm*

***Minutes written and typed by Amy Renkenberger***

*\_\_\_\_\_as submitted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as revised.*

*R.D. Wolheter, SWCD Board Chairman*

*Scott Beecher, SWCD Vice Chairman*

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*Ron Vaughn, SWCD Board Supervisor*

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*Monroe Raber, SWCD Board Supervisor*

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*Aaron Fugate, SWCD Board Supervisor*

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*R.D. Wolheter: Supervisor Since Re- Elected Annual Meeting March 6, 2025/Currently Serving as Board Chairman, elected March 25,2025. Term as Supervisor ends March 9,2028/ Term as Chairman Expires March 5,2026*

*Amy Renkenberger (SWCD Staff) Appointed by SWCD Board as District Fiscal Officer March 25,2025/ Term as Fiscal Offer ends March 24,2026.*