ALPENA-MONTMORENCY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District

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Alpena, MI 49707
989-356-3596 ext. 108

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 06, 2026 Monthly Meeting
(Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District Office, Alpena)

Attendance: Board Members: Skarbek, Estlack, Brown, Lizon (late); Associate Director Bill Houston; Staff: Dr. Greg Corace (FAP), Charlie Doan (CTAP), John Schmitz (DM), Emily Frechette (CA); Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Brown. Not present: Lewis, Bryan Zabel (NRCS)

Public Comment:

Additions to agenda:

Approval of Consent Agenda:
Meeting minutes (July, 2026)
Financial Report, Payment of AMCD bills
Staff Reports

- Motion made by Estlack to approve the consent agenda; supported Skarbek.

Roll Call vote: Ayes: Brown, Estlack, Skarbek. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Committee Updates:

1. Board Governance Work
   Brown provides handouts: organizational calendar and roles & responsibilities. Brown reports the electronic calendar access for all staff and directors is helpful. Discussion regarding the timing of setting items on the calendar. Schmitz recommends this to occur following future annual meetings set in September. Frechette indicates it is possible to set organizational timeline events on the general calendar.

2. Hunter-Harvest- Update
   Estlack goes over list of talking points. Discussion about having a standard set of cuts. Schmitz reiterates two of the processors will cut the deer to order and both have a flat rate for processing. Skarbek clarifies the flow of our process / deer from hunter to processor to recipient. Discussion regarding inclusion of weight and yield numbers on our advertising and whether processors are willing to make sausages for customers (adding spices, etc.). Schmitz mentions we may pick up a third processor and clarifies recipients will contact Frechette – not the processor – if they have issues or questions. Schmitz mentions the three flyers that Frechette has made. Doan suggests having recipients sign an agreement to clarify expectations. Estlack suggests also having a letter for deer donors. Schmitz states deer donors can't just be anybody; they must be part of our program.

3. Budget-Finance- Update
   No documents were sent because everything changed after the committee meeting. Last year (FY25) 85,500 for CTAP was our budget; this year (FY26) our CTAP budget is $81,678. A week after the committee created the budget, MDARD said CTAP awardees can also get 10,600/year for Regenerative Agriculture which will focus on education/outreach. Now instead of being 4K behind, we are 6k ahead.

Meanwhile an executed agreement for the WRM grant has not yet been received. We'll find out Sept. 8th about the grant from CFNEM. There are too many moving variables to be able to present a budget at this time. The budget presented at the next meeting will be a final version. There will be no staff raises proposed at this time, although this issue may come up during the year. First priority is to double Frechette's hours from 15/week to 30/week. Instead of paying 1300 for MACD membership like we did last year, MACD is asking all CDs to contribute additional 500 and have staff meet with legislators in Lansing. We won't pay that until next FY.

4. Outreach- No Report

5. Forestry- No Report

6. Tree Sale- Update
   Committee has not yet met, but has looked at order sheets from the past 4 years. Expanding the urban component is being considered. Looking at getting larger conifers 30 – 40" range. Can we get trees in two-gallon containers? Sourcing stock from further south is better from a climate change perspective per Corace. Is the committee considering hybrids such as Dunstan chestnut? Offering natives is an elective choice and is not mandated by MDARD or MACD. Policy states we should buy from Michigan sources, not large quantities from out-of-state.

7. 5 Year Strategic Plan- No Report

District Business:

OLD:
Discussion on setting committees will occur in the fall. We should have a set group of committees that are appointed after the annual meeting. When something new comes up, we can direct it into an existing committee or set up a temporary committee. Committee structure: no more than 2 directors per committee. Associate directors can be on them. Keep total number to 6 or less to prevent committee from getting too big. No more than two staff members per committee. Frechette will perform the role of secretary for each committee. Brown suggests committees must have stated purpose: members listed; longer-term committees should maintain a regular schedule and gauge progress towards outcomes. Each committee shall have a chair who will maintain progress and report to the board; committee chairs may be designated by the board chair. Doan suggests adding the committee expectations to the roles & responsibilities document. Regarding committee reports, committees should engage the board when necessary but make decisions independently in committee. When decisions are agreed upon, present them as recommendations to the board. The list of committees includes some permanent and some temporary. Input is requested before the October meeting.

Since April when we got CDs that earn interest, we've picked up a regenerative agriculture grant that is on a reimbursement basis (30 – 40K). We need more financial flexibility to accommodate reimbursement grants. Between the four different grants, we could easily have up to 80K paid out before getting reimbursed.

- Motion made by Estlack to pause the purchase of CDs (up to 30K total) until such time as we have a clear vision of the cash flow; supported Skarbek.

Roll Call vote: Ayes: Brown, Estlack, Lizon, Skarbek. Nays: None. Motion carried.

In May we discussed increasing the mileage reimbursement. As long as gas is over $4/gallon, staff would receive 2 hours comp time in lieu of increasing the reimbursement. Since then, the federal mileage reimbursement rate has increased three and a half cents per mile, from 72.5 cents to 76 cents per mile. Current gas prices are at $4.20. It is up to staff to use the comp time allotted to them.

NEW:
Schmitz recommends we move Board meeting dates for calendar year 2027 from the first Thursday to the second Thursday of each month. When the first Thursday is only a few days after the beginning of the month, it creates a time crunch for directors to read reports before the meeting. January meeting was added back in. 9/23/27 will be our annual meeting instead of December 2026. Let's have a larger one and grill out at the warehouse. That will match up our board calendar with our fiscal year.

Frechette requests directors and staff to follow our Facebook page, subscribe to our YouTube channel and "Like", share, and comment on both platforms to increase engagement with AMCD's content. Brown suggests adding Facebook "likes" for each post to the communications report.

Doan and Corace indicate they can help publicize the 9/12 scrap tire event. Rural landowners have the most scrap tires. Our email and social media can suffice - don't worry about paper flyer distribution. Suggestion to contact Townships. Blight people know where to find junk tires.

Frechette shares positive response from Michigan Prescribed Fire Council (MPFC) regarding her outreach inquiry. Discussion regarding prescribed fire and event planning elements. Estlack volunteers his property for prescribed burn. Frechette recommends that AMCD become a member of MPFC and sponsor their Burning Issues workshop to be held in early February in Gaylord. More info to follow re: sponsorship levels.

Re: venue for 7/17/27 open house. Emerick Park in Hillman is suggested and Briley Twp Park.

TASKS TO BE COMPLETED:

- Meet with 5 Year Planning Committee to set Business Plan
- Finalize FY27 Budget Proposal
- Make Public Announcement (Paper) for Public Hearing on Budget for September 24th

PUBLIC COMMENT:

PUBLIC ACTS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

Next Board Meeting is **Thursday, September 24th at 5:00 p.m. at Brush Creek Mill in Hillman.**

Motion to adjourn was made by Estlack at 7:07 p.m. seconded Skarbek.

John Schmitz, District Manager

Doug Brown, Board Chair
Approved / Amended / Disapproved