

Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District

ALPENA-MONTMORENCY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 05, 2026 Monthly Meeting (Brush Creek Mill)

Attendance: Board Members: Lizon. Brown, Lewis, Estlack (by phone); Associate Director Bill Houston; Christine Roman (Regional MDARD Coordinator); Staff: Dr. Greg Corace (FAP), Charlie Doan (CTAP), John Schmitz (DM), Emily Frechette (CA). Meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM, by Brown, Chair. Not present: Skarbek

Public Comment: Presentation by Dr. Greg Corace on Forestry Assistance Program (FAP)

Additions to agenda: none

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Meeting minutes (January, 2026)

Financial Report, Payment of AMCD bills

- Motion made by Lewis to approve the minutes and consent agenda; supported Lizon.
- Roll Call vote: Ayes: Brown, Lizon, and Lewis. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Reports:

The Reports were handed out and reviewed by the Board prior to the meeting. There was no conversation on the FAP Report, the MAEAP Report, the Communications Report, or the NRCS Report.

Schmitz presents his report. We will be ready for the 2nd 12-month CD deposit after April 1st.

Roman provides the MDARD partner report. A new element in this year's reviews will be succession planning. It is important for Board to know where the keys to the kingdom are and how to navigate change. A whole other part of succession planning goes along with your mission; which grants are being pursued and making sure things are congruent with your mission.

District Business:

OLD:

Discussion on creating a database for hunters and non-hunters looking to obtain deer. Schmitz and Estlack talked w DNR Emily Sewell – she came in with a list of why we can't do it. Lots of regulations. John responded instead of saying no. let's figure out a way to say yes and go thru correct regulations. DNR does have the "Hunters Feeding Michigan" program where they pay processing and deer meat goes to food banks in southern Michigan. We don't have that up here. They're saying people aren't allowed to go pick up venison from processor if they didn't shoot it. Our goal is not selling wild meat – just paying for processing. The DNR's issue is with chain of custody. Testing for lead and bovine TB is required. Currently deer carcasses are loaded into reefer trailer in Atlanta, trucked to Holland, tested for lead, and put into food banks downstate. Brown suggests

developing process for getting processed deer into local food banks, presenting to Cam Cavitt, etc. Subcommittee will be appointed in April.

Woody plant sale – last year at this time we had 85 orders; now we have 76. By end of February last year, we had made 21K: 30K this year. The first 5 days March we got 25 orders. Pine orders are terrible this year due to ice storm. Many areas are not going to clean up. Emergency program hasn't started yet; we have 160 property owners still waiting on help from this program in Alpena and Montmorency counties. Fruit trees & shrubs are flying off the shelves. Sapling sales are going well. We will probably wrap the saplings like we wrap fruit trees.

Newsletter was going through Montmorency Tribune for print, but their printer broke a couple weeks ago. We are looking for another printer. We have made improvements to layout and content and will be making more changes. It will be in color on 11x17" paper. We have a new donation to list. After the initial mailing, subsequent issues will be sent electronically.

Lewis was nominated for Treasurer at the January meeting. Since Lewis was not present, the election of Treasurer was tabled. Brown nominates Lewis for position of Treasurer and Lewis accepts.

- Motion made by Brown to elect Lewis Treasurer; supported Lizon.

Roll Call vote: Ayes: Brown, Lizon, and Lewis. Nays: None. Motion carried.

NEW

Community Needs Assessment survey 2023 results & questions are discussed. We are due for another one in July 2027. Goal: to put together new questionnaire and have it ready by tree sale pickup this year. We will have over a year to gather the information. This should really be an ongoing effort. Should be updated every year in the summer. We edited the template extensively and included deer browse under the biodiversity heading. The survey can be made electronic. Roman recommends reviewing county plans to see if they are in alignment. Results can be used as a direct link to funding. How to decide what to ask people? Our questions influence feedback. How are we actually using that information? Lizon suggests use of AI to improve questions. Lizon volunteered to serve on the CNA Survey committee.

Brush Creek Mill is now charging \$50/meeting instead of \$50 per year to use their venue. \$250 for the year. Per Schmitz this amount is within budget.

Discussion on Atlanta manager's office hours and public's ability to know when manager is at Briley Township Hall. Addition of calendar to website is briefly discussed.

Discussion on regenerative farmer network grant w/ NEMI Regen Network. We will know by March 10. This grant would tag-team us with Healthy Food Network and look at regenerative agriculture making connections between farms and groups that want to look at better ways of farming, and to share ideas and thoughts between the groups. Making a network of like-minded groups to put together farm visits, network meetings. Our CD would be responsible for incoming funds and distribution of funds. We would get admin fee of \$2700 to do this. Grant ends in November.

The NEMI Regen Network wanted to apply for this grant. We are a collaborator. After we talked, Doan learned MDARD was doing a listening session on Farm to Table in Alcona County. This segment of farming Doan's program hasn't touched much. These are veggie farmers, with greenhouses, etc. Probably 20 some folks. NEMI Healthy Food Initiative covers Region 5. There were farmers from Standish, Onaway. Got a number of new contacts. Will be doing everyone who's in the network. Will be required to get soil health assessment. Doan will be on properties doing that anyway this year. A bunch of folks are interested in regen practices and trying to include in operations. Doan wants to get more row-crop folks, cattle, dairy. It usually costs them a lot more money. It's a great opportunity and can also help us plug into Thunder Bay Watershed Management Plan. Soil

improvement lessens soil erosion. Caution is recommended working with John & Christine because their salaries depend on these grants. Their involvement may not last after the grant ends. Brook Alloway (B&B Farms) formerly worked for AMCD. Concern expressed about non-relevant activities. She agreed to join the network. There are limitations for producers in this area to get their products to market.

- Motion made by Lewis to approve the expense of \$750 to have WATZ broadcast live at tree sale; supported Lizon.

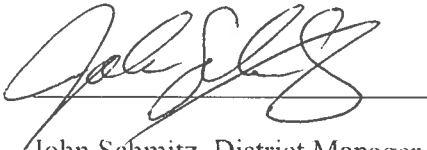
Roll Call vote: Ayes: Brown, Lizon, and Lewis. Nays: None. Motion carried.

TASKS TO BE COMPLETED:

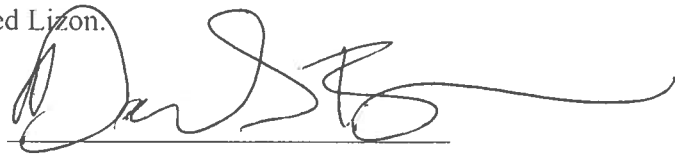
- Send newsletter out – paper copies with electronic/website option
- Work on Conservation Needs Assessment Questions
- Future Meeting (May) – Five-Year and Annual Business plan review
- Put Manager's Atlanta office hours at Briley Township Hall on website/FB (?) – add calendar to website

Next Board Meeting is **Thursday, April 2nd at 5:00 p.m. at the Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District office.**

Motion to adjourn was made by Lewis at 7:23 p.m. seconded Lizon.



John Schmitz, District Manager



Doug Brown, Board Chair
Approved / Amended / Disapproved

