

NDWCA BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center, Bismarck
February 3rd and 6th

Yet to be Board Approved

President Cliff Ferebee called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Introductions. Members in attendance were Cliff Ferebee, Roger Gunderson, Rick Schmidt, Bill Walker, Joan Lorge, Jamen Windish, Levi Jacobson, Tom Leo, Jim Bahm, Josh Short, Samantha McGrath, NDDA and Merlin Leithold, executive secretary.

Guests present: John Mortenson, NDDA, and CJ Pearce, Emmons County.

Additional agenda items were: None. Jamen moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bill seconded the motion. **M/C**

Minutes: The September minutes were reviewed. Joan moved to approve the minutes as presented. Jim seconded the motion. **M/C**

Financial Report: Merlin gave the financial report. Josh moved to accept the financial report. Roger seconded the motion. **M/C**

Budget: The 2025 budget passed in September was reviewed. Discussion. Bill moved to approve the budget as is and forward it to the annual meeting for final approval. Tom seconded the motion. **M/C**

CDs: Expiration Dates etc.: Merlin asked that since the National Travel Fund will be voted on at the annual meeting, that the board discuss this on Thursday's board meeting. Everyone agreed.

Resolutions: None brought up at the area meetings

Committee Reports:

Education Committee Report: Tom Leo, co- chairman. Poster Contest. Derrill received numerous posters, and he will put them on the table for folks to vote for them. Tom attended the Ventenata meeting that was held in Billings County, as did several other board members. Excellent turnout and excellent information presented. Tom just returned from the Montana Weed Association Conference held in Great Falls. He represented the association at that conference. He was a presenter, and he spoke about our history and what we do as an association. Merlin was asked to attend, but because our conference was this week, it wouldn't work for Merlin, and rather than not be on their program, Merlin asked Tom, who hails from Montana, to see if he could attend, and Tom was gracious enough to do so. Thank you, Tom, for attending. Next year it will be held in Billings. Tom has ideas for speakers for next year as well. Merlin handed out the table coverings for the area booths.

Break for Pizza

Legislative: Merlin said that there are very few bills that concern us. HB 1318 is a pesticide bill that cleans up language in that law. HB 1334 designates Rhubarb as the official state vegetable. HB 1380, changes how county minutes are published, allowing websites to be the official site. There are a lot of tax bills. HB1009 is the department budget. It will add \$366,900 to the noxious

weed line in the budget, for either LAP or TAG or a combination thereof. Currently there are 990 various legislative bills, with more to come. Merlin has been at the legislature only one day, a lot of new legislators.

Convention Report: Merlin says that he has around 100 registered, give or take a few either way. Merlin expects a few more. Merlin preordered 120 meals. It's a trick not ordering too many but also need enough for those attending. Merlin stated that having only 8 vendors this year is concerning. Stacking on top of other states' conferences doesn't help. Jamen suggested that we reach out to neighboring states to find out their dates. We did well on sponsorship, which is good. Merlin went through the schedule with the board. All speakers are confirmed. Steve Bakken, who chairs the Burleigh County Weed Board, will give the welcome on Wednesday morning. Merlin mentioned who the moderators are as well. He briefly talked on the order of speakers. The vendor breakfast will be in the vendor room this year. Joe Ickley will be bringing along the weed control guides to hand out.

We will have subs again on Thursday.

Agency Reports:

Government: Given by Levi Jacobson, ND G&F and government representative

Summary of 2024 Noxious Weed Control efforts on US Fish and Wildlife Service Lands

Eastern North Dakota WMD Complex

Devils Lake WMD collected leafy spurge beetles at a local collection site and purchased 67,200 beetles that were distributed across 10 sites in the district in 2024. We've also coordinated with local weed boards to release gall fly and stem-mining weevils on Waterfowl Production Areas to control Canada Thistle and have found some early success. We continued to target scattered Russian olive trees as well as Chinese Elm invasions at Kellys Slough NWR using the Diamond™ disc mulcher. This equipment continues to work well, and we are finding good long-term control of these species without chemically treating the stump. We also utilized AmeriCorps Volunteers to cut, and stump treat Russian Olive trees at Kellys Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

Yellow toadflax patches continue to be monitored with one additional site discovered in 2024. Sites were treated with hand pulling. One patch has become troublesome and will be treated with chemicals in 2025. The district continues to coordinate with local weed boards and target troublesome noxious weed areas with mechanical control and decrease the acreage treated by chemicals. We find coordination and communication with local representatives to be an effective means to keep plant diversity at a high level in our grassland habitats.

Chase Lake WMD (includes Arrowwood) - Chase Lake Wetland Management District partnered with the Student Conservation Association in 2024 to hire two interns for the summer. The SCA crew continued the Chase Lake WMD Invasives project surveying district fee title lands, mapping infestations, and subsequently treating newly found infestation acres with biological control. Nearly 300,000 bio control agents were released across the district. Additionally, other FWS staff treated 327 acres of mapped infestations chemically.

Valley City WMD - Limited weed mapping activities have occurred since 2015 due to a lack of staffing. However, this year the district hired one SCA intern who assisted in locating and

mapping noxious weeds. She surveyed 8 WPAs, covering approximately 2,500 acres, and mapped 110 acres of noxious weeds. The most common weed identified was leafy spurge. During this process, new patches of both leafy spurge and yellow toadflax were discovered.

To help control the spread of leafy spurge, the district released 80,000 leafy spurge beetles at 10 high-priority sites. In addition to biological control efforts, the district mechanically treated 113 acres for noxious weeds and wood species. One of the WPAs is hayed every other year to manage the spread of elm saplings from the neighboring tree belt. This year, a forestry cutter was used to remove larger elms that had grown too large to be managed by mowing, approximately 5 acres were treated using this method.

Tewaukon NWR/WMD - Tewaukon staff treated a total of 657 acres of invasive species on the Refuge and on WPAs in 2024. This included mowing areas infested by phragmites to experiment with using flooding to control densely covered areas, mowing bull thistle and musk thistle in prairie reconstructions, and releasing spurge beetles on 60 sites across the Refuge and District.

In addition to the work done by staff, Tewaukon also brought in a Conservation Corp crew from Minnesota. The purpose of their visits was to enhance tallgrass prairie habitats within Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District lands. Conservation Corps crew members accomplished this through invasive plant management and tree removal along Tewaukon's Auto Tour Route and on Aaser WPA. Crew members targeted Russian olive trees using the cut-stump herbicide treatment method and was able to address 40 unique sites along the Auto Tour Route as well as cutting down and treating densely invaded Russian olive trees on the Aaser WPA, improving nearly 100 acres of tallgrass prairie that had an average of 30% infestation rate of Russian olive trees across the treated area on Aaser WPA.

Northwest ND Complex

J Clark Salyer & Upper Souris NWR hired three ACE interns that helped locate, map and treat noxious weeds including leafy spurge, yellow toadflax and Canada thistle. A total of 932 acres were chemically treated and 695 acres were biologically treated. Aspen mulching was a high priority at J. Clark NWR where crews used heavy equipment to mechanically treat 587 acres in 2024.

Des Lacs NWR & Lostwood WMD spray crews chemically treated 86 acres of leafy spurge, Canada thistle and wormwood on forty different sites on the refuge and district. Fall treatments were limited due to drought conditions. Yellow Toadflax and Common Tansy continue to be a problem with new patches being discovered on a regular basis on the refuge and district.

Crosby WMD chemically treated a total of 18 acres of weeds this year. Leafy spurge, baby's breath and Canada thistle continue to be the dominant invasive species throughout the district. Yellow toadflax spotted knapweed and common tansy are limited to small patches on a couple WPAs so far. Staff noticed decreases in baby's breath and tansy where it was treated the previous year. Cut-stump treatment applied last year on Russian olives was less effective than desired. Staff plans to try a different chemical mix this coming year to prevent re-sprouts.

Lostwood NWR hired one ACE intern that helped treat 430 acres of noxious weeds and surveyed over 4100 acres. We anticipated a spring prescribed burn would promote noxious weed growth and were prepared for EDRR. As anticipated, new patches were located, mapped and treated.

We've had great results in previous years with a single Milestone treatment post-burn and are optimistic for positive results in FY25.

Central ND Complex

Long Lake NWR utilized 2 seasonal staff to complete our strike team's efforts using chemical, mechanical and biological treatment methods. The staff targeted leafy spurge, wormwood, and invasive tree species across the complex. They used UTV mounted sprayers to apply herbicide to 88 acres of leafy spurge and wormwood, across 215 sites. They also completed basal bark treatment of invasive tree species across 11.3 acres at 7 sites, continuing our work to control the invasion of Siberian elms at Slade NWR and adding a few new sites in the WMD. Invasive Eastern red cedar seedlings were removed from 30 acres of Long Lake NWR using mechanical methods. Many of the source trees were also removed. The staff also released over 100,000 leafy spurge beetles, across 850 acres at 4 sites. These releases were mostly at new sites, to expand their footprint in our district. We also rechecked the location of our purple loosestrife EDRR and found no plants. We will continue to monitor the area. Much of this work would not have been completed without the Strike Team funds to hire seasonals and purchase chemical and other equipment.

Audubon NWR & WMD seasonal field technicians, along with Volunteers from a local Pheasants Forever Chapter, spent a majority of the summer season mechanically treating Russian Olive and Eastern Red Cedar trees. Hundreds of hours were logged shearing trees and then chemically treating the stumps. These activities occurred around the refuge headquarters and uplands, on several dikes and water control structures, and within the uplands of several WPA's within McLean and Sheridan Counties. When weather conditions allowed, patches of Canada Thistle on refuge and district uplands were treated with Milestone. A considerable effort was also made to pick Black Henbane plants from several dikes and water control structures on the refuge.

Kulm WMD staff and 3 seasonal laborers or technicians completed strike team efforts this year. Removal of scattered trees occurred during the winter months. Leafy spurge was targeted for treatment according to our annual planning and response to complaints. The early rains this year brought a flush of wormwood and Canada thistle, and a considerable amount of time was spent mechanically treating those units with mowing in the summer months. Follow-up fall chemical applications were used on acreages that had suitable regrowth of the target pest. Work continues a long-term tree removal project where rows were removed 10 years ago. Seedlings from those shelterbelts were treated on 41 acres with UTV and handheld basal bark chemical applications. Our single spotted knapweed site was hand-pulled to treat this year. Siberian elm is the greatest woody invasive threat in the Kulm district. Other species include Russian olive, cottonwood, and a few Eastern red cedars. Passive monitoring of flea beetles occurred when on sites, but an attempt to formally monitor our recent release sites will be attempted again next year. Weed complaints and abundance tend to ebb and flow, but this year was higher than average for Canada thistle, especially.

Summary of 2024 Noxious Weed Control efforts on ND Game and Fish Department lands

Chemically Treated 2,914.7 acres and mowed another 27 acres.

Treated leafy spurge, Canada thistle, yellow toad flax, absinth wormwood, hounds' tongue, saltcedar

Collected and moved bio control flea beetles for leafy spurge on 12 different Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).

Worked with the Department of AG and released Red Headed Leafy Spurge Borers (Oberea) on three WMAs again in 2025.

Continued efforts to monitor and treat saltcedar along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers in the NW corner of the state, as well as along the Missouri south of Bismarck.

Budget for noxious weed control includes permanent staff salary, seasonal staff, contractors, and operating expenses is \$725,000 for noxious weed control for 2023 – 2025 biennium.

In addition, grazed and mowed several hundred acres addressing weed and invasive species concerns.

Summary of 2024 Noxious weed control efforts on US Army Corps of Engineers Lands

Treated 2000 acres with helicopter sprayer for mostly Canada thistle on Lake Sakakawea.

Surveyed and treated 5898 acres of federal property at the Garrison project with ATV sprayers.

Surveyed and treated 1200 acres of federal property at Bowman project with ATV sprayers.

Surveyed and treated 250 acres of federal property at Pipestem project with ATV sprayers.

We have purchased a spraying drone that will be implemented into our control processes in 2025.

Treated 154 acres of Leafy Spurge and 3.5 acres of Canada Thistle on Oahe Project.

Summary of 2024 Noxious weed control efforts on ND Department of Trust Lands.

In 2024, NDDTL documented applications from 60 producers who reported noxious weed and pest control activities impacting just over 20,500 acres on 134 tracts through a combination of spot-spraying, patch-spraying, & broadcast applications. On average, each producer who applied for cost-share received \$463 per tract. Primary weed species targeted thru applications included Leafy Spurge, Canada Thistle, Absinth Wormwood, and Houndstongue. This is current as of January 7th, 2025, with a few applications still coming in.

Summary of 2024 Noxious weed control efforts on ND Forest Service Lands.

The North Dakota Forest Service manages approximately 14,000 acres. Noxious weed control efforts are focused on the roughly 2,200 acres of grasslands as the forested portions naturally suppress the spread of North Dakota designated noxious weeds. Approximately 160 acres of leafy spurge were sprayed in the fall using Plateau and Emulate. This has been proven to provide effective control for a few years while maintaining grassland diversity as spraying occurs after most forbes are dormant. In July, spurge beetles were collected and deployed to high density infestations with poor accessibility in Turtle Mountain State Forest. Spotted knapweed has been

found near Hahn's Bay recreation area and is inspected and hand-pulled throughout the summer. The occasional Absinth Wormwood has been identified throughout other State Forest locations, and those sites are inspected and hand pulled as well.

NDDA: Samantha McGrath, noxious weed specialist

Weed Seed Free Forage (WSFF)

For the 2024 season, almost 6,000 acres were inspected in 11 counties. The final bale count was 17,768 oats, alfalfa, grass, and wheat, durum, and barley straw.

NDDA still has a healthy stock of purple and yellow twine available in 2 different knot strengths available to producers at cost (9,600 feet/170-pound knot strength or 4,000 feet/440-pound knot strength).

Annual Noxious Weed Survey:

- The 2024 annual noxious weed survey is now available. You can also find it on the NDDA noxious weed webpage or contact Samantha directly.
- The due date for the survey is March 1, 2025.
- Completing this survey helps keep our contact directory of weed officers/board members current and up to date.

LAP and TAG:

- The fiscal year deadline for LAP and TAG is June 30, 2025.
- The last day to submit vouchers is July 10.

USFS:

- Please reach out if you have questions or interests.
 - Clear description of the project & detailed budget

Resource Materials:

- Law Book Reprint; waiting until after the Legislative session.
- Weed Poster; working on a contract with an artist to re-do the poster from 2010.
- We have Identification & Control of Invasive & Troublesome Weed Books on hand.

John Mortenson, NDDA. There is still money available for the purchase of biocontrol agents. He will have bug sorters available, along with bug nets and parts. I am also working on a new biocontrol poster.

At this time Cliff asked the board to go into the executive session to discuss the executive committee's meeting and asked all guests to leave the room while the board is in executive session. Rick moved the board be in executive session, Roger seconded the motion. **M/C**

The board is now into executive session. No minutes are kept during this time.

Jim moved that we exit the executive session, Jamen seconded the motion. **M/C**

Industry: Bill Walker, Industry representative, gave the report.

As we move into the 2025 year and look forward to the 2025 season we have seen just a few changes.

As 2024 progressed it seemed that most of the manufacturers had caught up with supply demands, product time getting to the distributors has decreased, making supply better and delivery time to the end users better in the later part of the 2024 season “BUT” as 2024 progressed some of the supply regressed and supplies have gotten short on some products going into 2025 again.

***2,4-D products**

2,4-D products went from a down swing in early 2024 to now an upswing starting in late 2024 and continuing into 2025.

These changes are due to **tariffs** that are being applied to offshore products coming into the U.S., many 2,4-D products are either made offshore or many components need to make them are made offshore and, that is affecting pricing, pricing is also increasing due to the demand of certain 2,4-D products.

Rumor is, it is expected to trend throughout the rest of this year, increases on 2,4-D amine products is up \$6.00 per gallon plus from the manufacturers, ester products have followed this same trend, U.S. manufacturers are stating higher demands on products produced in the U.S and it's favored nation suppliers, offshore products from China, India and some others are expected to have higher tariffs put on them which will in turn, drive up the costs of those products as well.

Some of this has stemmed from some lawsuits filed by U.S. companies on the dumping of excess products onto the U.S. markets, some are also saying this is attributed to larger demand of these products as some users, are replacing the use of dicamba products in fallow and set aside acres with 2,4-D products, (trying to reduce dicamba complaint issues).

***CORTEVA** – Has announced it's 2024/2025 pricing structure on its products, so far it does look like CORTEVA is basically holding pricing on many of their products at the 2024 level or below for 2025.

HighNoon Herbicide has remained at \$94.00 per gallon in 1's and 2.5's and \$91.50 per gallon in 250-gallon totes.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you are looking at what products cost you per acre, you might consider using **HighNoon Herbicide** in place of your **Milestone Herbicide** application sites, HighNoon Herbicide applied at 20 ounces per acre (\$14.80 acre) will cost you about \$1.00 per acre less than Milestone Herbicide applied at 7 ounces per acre (\$15.89 acre), this is equivalent rates of aminopyralid applied and HighNoon will gain you a broader spectrum of weed control.

Milestone Herbicide has remained at \$290.00 per gallon in 2.5's and \$72.50 per quart,

Freelexx Herbicide has remained at \$32.75 per gallon in all sizes.

Transline Herbicide has taken a price decrease of about \$30.00 per gallon and **Vista XTR Herbicide** has also taken a price decrease of about \$25.00 per gallon at this time, **Vastlan Herbicide** also took a slight drop down to \$102.00 per gallon, \$3.00 per gallon decrease.

Tordon 22K Herbicide – looks like it will stay flat on government pricing and programs for 2025.

Grazon PD3 Herbicide – Looks like there would be no increases from 2024 to 2025.

Slight increase on

Piper EZ Herbicide up slightly to \$332.00 per gallon (up \$4.00 per gallon, **Opensight Herbicide** up to \$100.00 per pound, up \$2.00 lb.

Curtail Herbicide - has been discontinued and no longer will be available from any company, consider using **HighNoon Herbicide as a replacement** or possibly even **E-2 Herbicide** as a replacement for your Curtail Herbicide you have used in your cost share programs in the past.

***ENVU**

ENVU – currently there has not been any price increases on **Esplanade 200 SC Herbicide** and **Plainview SC Herbicide** for 2025.

Method 240 SL Herbicide did take about a 2% increase February 1, 2025 – pricing is now \$364.80 per gallon in 2.5-gallon containers.

Rejuvra Herbicide pricing has remained the same at this time from 2024 for 2025.

Current pricing on **Rejuvra** is **\$1,135.36 per gallon in 2.5-gallon containers and \$346.24 per quart in quart containers**, excellent product for Ventenata, Medusahead and Cheatgrass control in range and pasture sites.

Other products such as **Escort XP, Telar XP, Oust XP and Oust Extra** at this time looks like they may remain flat in pricing for 2025.

TruRange Herbicide Update – EPA has approved the label, it has gone through the final comment period, and they received one comment which they (EPA) has to address before they can release the final label, ENVU is anticipating product available for 2025 applications, product availability will also depend upon how quickly any of the State Agriculture Departments approve the label/product for use within their state as well.

From Justin Hossfeld, National Sales Manager, Range and Pasture:

The TruRange label completion has slowed somewhat due to the change in administrations and what feels like posturing by the EPA in their decision to expose the label to more scrutiny than should be required because ACP is not a new active and has been in adjacent spaces and aerially applied in R&P spaces in the Southwest.

We (ENVU) have insisted on and expect a meeting soon with EPA leadership to lobby for them to follow through what they committed to. I do not have a good estimate for a timeline, but it will likely slow things by at least 45 to 60 days.

It's very disappointing and frustrating and I apologize for the delay,

Justin

Justin Hossfeld

National Sales Manager - Range & Pasture

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This product would be for use for control of noxious and general broadleaf weed control on grazed sites, rangeland, or permanent pasture, will have **(NO haying labeling)** and will most likely come as a restricted use product, will be a very good product for Leafy Spurge and Canada Thistle control and possible brush in your permanent pastures and rangeland sites.

***NuFarm** – has started to send out updated pricing, much of their pricing will be based upon what happens in the phenoxy markets coming up, We may see drastic price increases on many of their products containing 2,4-Ds over the next few months, NuFarm is basic in 2,4-D type products so we may see price changes quickly over the next few months.

NuFarm does make **E-2 Herbicide** which could possibly be a decent replacement for Curtail Herbicide, has very good non-crop labeling, CRP, Farmsteads, Pasture and Rangelands, and Right-A-Ways labeling.

Current pricing on E-2 Herbicide is \$61.25 per gallon (up slightly from earlier this year) but still, puts it right in where the Curtail pricing was, use rates 3 to 4 pints per acre rates will get most broadleaf weeds.

***NACHINO America – Venue Herbicide Updates.**

There is some supply of Venue Herbicide available for the 2025 season, once everything will be switched over to Pimlico, Pimlico will be the 2x strength product and use rates will be lower than the Venue product.

Venue Herbicide is still \$145.00 per quart while supplies last, pricing will change once the Pimlico Herbicide is available (again, stronger version of Venue Herbicide, lower use rates).

***ALLIGARE** - Alligare has started to put out their programs for 2025, they do manufacturer **Whetstone Herbicide**, it might be something to look at.

Whetstone Herbicide is the generic product to Milestone Herbicide, has all same labeling, use rates, use sites and active ingredients, has the off-site hay sales labeling as well, this product is available from distribution, this product is price set by Alligare, like the Milestone Herbicide.

Whetstone Herbicide \$265.00 per gallon in 2.5 gal. cont.

\$67.50 per quart in 1-quart containers

***Glyphosate** products – pricing has seemed to be stable for now, large price drops earlier in 2024, pricing dropped by as much as one half in most cases and up to 2/3 in some cases from the 2022/ 2023 pricing of glyphosate products, this includes all brands including Bayer's branded Roundup products, 2025 pricing has been stable so far.

***Adjuvants/ Surfactants/Drift Control Products** – We have seen some slight price increases on some products, these have been in the 2% to 3 % ranges or less, most of these price changes on these normally come about the first of each year.

Again, there were some spot outages on some products in early 2024, as 2024 progressed these got better but as 2025 starts, we are seeing some spot outages again, you will still want to make sure to let your distributors of your products, your equipment suppliers, your parts suppliers and any other supplier, know in advance of your possible needs so they can be prepared to make sure, they have what you need, when needed.

_OLD BUSINESS:

EPA Letter: Merlin stated that this is on the agenda because we were the group that drafted the letter for TruRange and made sure it was received by EPA. Since the process is again on hold, I have visited with Jarrod from Envu and have told him that if we need their assistance, reach out to me, and I will inform Senator Cramer's office, and ask them to again visit with EPA on this matter.

By laws update: They were taken to all the areas for their review. I had a grammar expert review the document and made a few minor changes. Merlin reviewed these with the board. Joan moved that we send this document to the annual meeting for their approval. Roger second the motion. **M/C**

Gravel Pits: Brought up at the area meetings, and Bill says we asked the same question every time, and we received nothing. What we have is what the state has from surrounding states, and what Bill has done. Maybe we need to take that and make a document.

National Travel Fund: Brought up at all area meetings. One suggestion from Area III was to combine both funds into one fund, call it the NoDak Fund, and use it for both. Bill told the board how it originally started. Merlin said that if it didn't have stipulations, the board would have used the money in other areas, as the association was not as financially sound as it is today. It will be on the agenda at the annual meeting. Bill will handle it.

Area Meetings: Merlin said that in June, the board said that the 4 options be taken to the area meetings. The results from the area meetings would be the deciding factor. Merlin reviewed what each area voted on. The results were overwhelming in favor of keeping the meetings as they are now, but Area V would like to have their area meeting on Thursday afternoon and have it in Dickinson. Roger moved to approve the results from the areas. Joan seconded the motion. Jamen said that we need to do a better job of getting counties to the area meetings. More discussion on the 4 questions asked. **M/C**

Cliff thanked everyone for the support he had this past year.

Being no other old business, Cliff transitioned the presidency to Jim.

Jim recessed the meeting until Thursday at around noon or a bit later.

Recessed at 7:07pm

Thursday, February 6th.

Jim Bahm, 2025 President, called the meeting back to order at 12:04 pm.

Those in attendance were Bill, Joan, Roger, Jim, Cliff, Tom, Samantha, Josh, Jamen, Travis Jepson and Merlin.

Guests: Jo Thompson, Stark County

Additional agenda items: CDs and Audit Committee

Jim talked about being respectful and not rude. You might not always like the entertainment but be respectful. He also mentioned that we need to go back to bios of speakers and to thank them after they finish.

NEW BUSINESS:

Executive Secretary's contract for 2025. Merlin left the room for a time. Discussion was held. Tom moved to renew Merlin's contract with a 2.5% increase a year, \$768.75 for a total of \$9,225 a year. Roger seconded the motion. **M/C**

Merlin was invited back into the room. Merlin accepted the increase and thanked the board for the increase in pay and their continuing support. Contracts were signed. Tom stated that when Merlin decides to quit or retire, he gives the board proper notice. Merlin said that when that time came, he hoped to be able to help with the transition, like what Randy did for Becky, for a couple of months and help with the next conference.

Conflict of Interest Forms: The board signed the conflict-of-interest forms for 2025.

Conference Follow up: Merlin talked about the conference. The auction brought in around \$4,300. He still needs to take the credit card fees from that figure yet, plus of course the meal and beer expenses. Slightly less from last year. AS far as the meals, we had around 105 eat at the banquet, about the same for the luncheon, and breakfast around 75. Ordered 125 with 118 registered.

Merlin has not looked at the comment sheets, but complaints he heard, cold dinner plates, crispy bacon, no orange juice at breakfast, and no breakfast at the hotel during the conference. A continental breakfast would help. Merlin will talk to the hotel and bring something to the March meeting.

Merlin will compile all the comments from the comment sheets by the March meeting.

CDs: The CD for regular savings is due February 17. National Travel is also due February 17th. The Youth CD is due in August. Discussion held. Will change the name of the National Travel CD to NoDak CD. Jamen moved to leave the interest in the CDS and renew them. Tom seconded the motion. **M/C**

Audit Committee: The committee would like to see more detailed reporting on the travel lines on its voucher. Merlin said that he does have detailed accounting in a book. Joan and Josh will come up with a form for Merlin. Joan would like to see the audit performed after the board meeting on Monday evening. Jim was asking about the audit if we have a state audit. Merlin said that

traditionally we have an external audit when we change secretaries, or if there are discrepancies in the internal audit.

Upcoming Conference Date: Next year, **2026**, Monday January 5th through Thursday, January 8th

2027 – January 11-14, **2028**, January 10-13, **2029**, January 8-11

Conference for 2030: January 7th – 10th question on whether we have an out clause, and what the contract ties us to, what we sign for. Merlin said that the contract does not cover costs, just the facility. Merlin will find out about having an option to leave the hotel. Josh moved that we keep it here, and that Merlin sign the contract only if we have a clause to get out of the contract, without penalty. Jamen seconded the motion. **M/C**

Committees: Annual meeting: Travis Jepson, 2nd vice will chair, Area I is the host. Other committee members are Bill, Samantha and Merlin

Speakers: Annual meeting committee

Vendors/Sponsors: Roger and Merlin

Food: Travis, Samantha and Merlin

Auction: Rick

IT: Travis

Education: Tom and Derrill (co-chairs), others he will appoint

Awards: Area alternate directors: I – Joel Anderson, II – Terry Weisz,

III – Jim Hennessy, IV – Greg Maier

V – Josh Hetland

Legislative: Exec. Board (Jim, Josh, Travis, Merlin)

Policy and By Laws: Bill, Joan, Merlin

Website: Travis, Merlin, executive board

Audit: Area I director (Roger) and two others

Travis would like a portable sound system to use for the symposium and for the conference. Could cost \$3,000 to \$4,000. Bill moved that Travis gets some quotes and brings them to the March meeting. Josh seconded the motion. **M/C**

Josh also talked about the association being on social media, Facebook, etc. Will bring to the March meeting.

Lobbyist for 2025: Josh moved that Merlin be the lobbyist for the association for 2025. Roger seconded the motion. **M/C**

Board meetings set for 2025 – the 4th Tuesday again, March 25th, June 24th, and September 23rd, at the Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center, Bismarck. All three meetings will start at 10:00 am., central time. Then on Monday, January 5th at 5:00 pm.

Sprayer schools for 2025: Have 3 schools. May 27th Dickinson, 28th Minot and 29th, Carrington. Registrations begin at 8:30 local time. The education committee will oversee planning.

Area Meetings for 2025: After some discussion, dates will be October 20th – Valley City or Jamestown, October 21st – Devils Lake, October 22nd – Minot, October 23rd – Washburn or Mandan, October 23rd – Dickinson 1 or 1:30 pm start time. Josh moved to do the area meetings at the above dates. Josh seconded the motion. **M/C**

Trade Booths: KFYR Agri International – Bismarck, Feb 11 & 12 (Paid by Corteva)

From NoDak: ND Winter Show – Valley City – March 5-9 – Jamen and Ron and Area II

Reclamation Conference – Watford City – March 4 & 5 - Tom

ND Association of Counties – Bismarck – Oct 26-28 - Merlin

ND Township Officers – Bismarck – Dec 8-9 - Merlin

Jamen moved to pay for the last four booths out of the NoDak Fund. Bill seconded the motion.

Discussion on getting a speaking part at the association of counties conference. Merlin will check.
M/C

Being no further business,

Bill moved to adjourn the meeting; Jamen seconded the motion. **M/C**

Meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Merlin Leithold
Executive secretary